

GOVERNOR LEMANU P. S. MAUGA

# STATE of the TERRITORY

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## COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

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37<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE, 3<sup>RD</sup> REGULAR SESSION  
JANUARY 10, 2022





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GOVERNOR

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Serial: 011 – 22

## **State of the Territory Address** **Governor's Foreword**

Before taking office on January 3rd, 2021, Talauega and I envisioned an American Samoa whose people are afforded an abundance of opportunities that would improve our way of life. To achieve this vision, it was imperative that we actively pursue partnerships with key leaders in our public and private sectors and most importantly our community. We firmly believe that fostering these partnerships would best inform our decisions and policies; for we have a common creed: to serve our people to the best of our ability.

Today, the Lemanu-Talauega Administration is pleased to share that through our collective efforts, American Samoa continues to advance and evolve economically, socially and culturally in the face of constant challenges exhausted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Documented here is our journey together since we took office; noting our triumphs and challenges with respect to the implementation of programs in 2021. The achievements of the past year and any future progress is only possible through collectively prioritizing the needs of our people.

COVID-19 remains a global threat yet no challenge is too difficult when we are united in a common cause. Collaboration between the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch is crucial to ensure that economic development projects are fully executed to improve our self-sufficiency as well as our emergency response capability.

The Territory has been blessed with a monumental surge in critically needed federal funding. It is our shared obligation to be good stewards of these monies. As the fiscal strength of our government continues to improve, so will our capacity to address our longstanding systemic issues and financial obligations.

We have worked diligently in 2021 to meet the challenges we faced and to effectively and efficiently deliver a wide array of services to our families and community. In partnership with our Fono, Judicial, and community leaders, we have been successful in setting the path towards a better future, a safe healthy community and an improved quality of life for our people and Territory. For the upcoming year, we must continue to meet these challenges with the same determination we have since January 2021.

This report is indicative of our collective efforts and we are grateful for all the hard work and the continuous support.

We look forward to what we will continue to achieve together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lemanu P. S. Mauga".

**LEMANU P. S. MAUGA**  
Governor

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# FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

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The financial outlook of our Territory showcases the collective work of the Administration to support the government and people of our Territory. Despite the overwhelming task, a freeze and roll back were implemented to assess inconsistencies with pay increases and conversions, adjust cost saving measures, and identify improper obligations of the government. The Administration has been successful in implementing the pay increase for the government while other authorities and entities are working to complete their analysis and pay increases. In turn, expectations from the government workforce have been raised through training and workforce development initiatives to enhance services to the public.

The Administration enforced the continued integrity of revenues to sustain government operations, coordinated efforts with a mid-year budgetary oversight and review, addressed audit recommendations, and implemented corrective actions as provided by the U.S. Treasury Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit, the US Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) Vehicle Audit and Government Wide Audit to include the US Department of Education (USDOE) High Risk Audit.

Government processes have been streamlined to improve efficiency and effectiveness by implementing revenue forecasting to trend accordingly with a focus on positive economic and performance outcomes, fostering proactive project management, and updated policies to incorporate best practices and lessons learned. Further, we have conducted comprehensive review and revisions of rules to address inefficiencies in the government.

Collaborative efforts to improve cost saving measures and strengthen collections enabled the government to close fiscal year 2021 in a positive light. Led by our Treasurer and his capable team, they have significantly improved collections and resolved many accounts payable issues to provide our Administration with stability and a clear picture of our financial health.

As a result of these efforts, our preliminary unaudited financial position is forecasting between \$8-\$9 million surplus for the fiscal year ending 2021. Total preliminary revenue collections saw an increase of \$6.7 million or a 20% increase as compared to FY 2020 with a more focused priority on taxpayer audits and collections. Treasury continues to resolve non-filers through the proper notification procedures. As a result, the overall compliance activity collections for FY 2021 increased by 24% as compared to the FY 2020 performance.

## **FY 2022 Budget**

Continuing the momentum set in the past year, the preliminary 2022 results for the first quarter of the fiscal year indicate we are again tracking to meet our forecasted revenue collections and maintain our quarterly budgeted expenditures. Accountability and integrity are the cornerstones of

this Administration. Corrective measures or budgetary adjustments shall be implemented to reaffirm our commitment to transparency.

The administration is pleased to share that it has exceeded the projected collection/revenues as forecasted in public law 37-2 for \$27,540,625. Preliminary FY 2022 first quarter revenues collected are \$27,832,803. Expenditures remain under the threshold at \$22,672,067, ensuring we adhere to budgetary compliance. Expenditures not exceeding revenue collections.



*Preliminary Fiscal Year 2022 First Quarter Revenue vs. Expenses*

As federal funds are approved by our President of the United States and U.S. Congress, we are truly grateful for these funds provided to assist the territory in our efforts to keep our island safe and families resilient in these unparalleled times of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Our territory has been blessed with the added funds in the form of child tax and the upcoming Infrastructure allocation for American Samoa to be managed over a 5-year period in the approved fields specific in the award.

These funds collectively with the ARPA funds to support our healthcare, infrastructure and other projects as identified in our ARPA Recovery Plan will place American Samoa on a plateau never before. Additionally, our tremendous support for our education system and infrastructure for both public and private schools utilizing the Education Stabilization Funds (ESF). Our administration working with our time-honored tradition of seeking knowledge from our cultural leaders in times of adversity has proven to strengthen our partnerships throughout our response to the current pandemic.

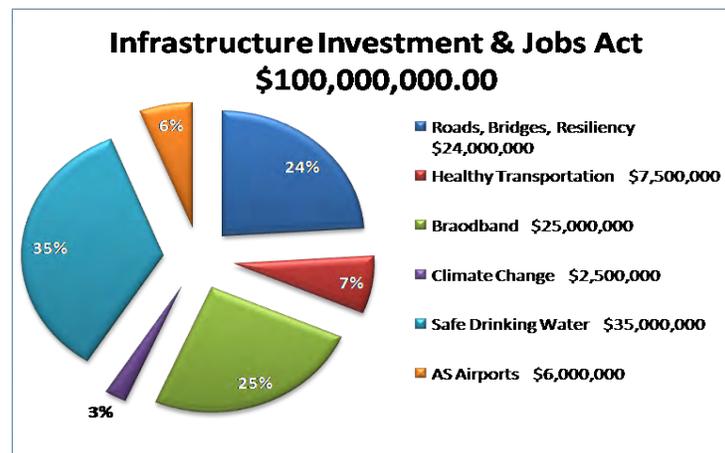
## Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

For decades, infrastructure in American Samoa has suffered from a systemic lack of investment. The historic Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will make life better for thousands of American Samoa residents, creating a generation of good paying jobs and economic growth.

American Samoa will receive approximately \$100 million over the next 5 years.

Infrastructure has been allocated as follows:

- Repair and rebuild our roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians (Territorial Highway Program)--to receive nearly \$24 million over five years to rebuild its roads and bridges.
- Improve healthy, sustainable transportation options for millions of Americans. America's transit infrastructure is inadequate – American Samoa would expect to receive \$7.5 million to improve public transportation options across the island.
- Help connect every American to reliable high-speed internet. American Samoa will receive a minimum allocation of \$25 million to help provide broadband coverage across the territory.
- Prepare more of our infrastructure for the impacts of climate change, cyber-attacks, and extreme weather events. American Samoa will expect to receive \$2.5 million to protect against cyberattacks.
- Deliver clean drinking water to every American and eliminate the nation's lead service lines and pipes.--American Samoa will expect to receive more than \$35 million over five years to improve water infrastructure in the region and ensure that clean, safe drinking water is a right in all communities.
- Improve our nation's airports. airports in American Samoa would receive approximately \$6 million for infrastructure development over five years.



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## ASG's Bond Rating

The mission of the American Samoa Economic Authority (ASEDA) is to promote economic development in the Territory through collaborative efforts with our private sector, business community, our people and government. Create government diversification of our economic pillars and places for the community to live, learn, play, work and do business. The Territory through the ASEDA has fulfilled its mandate to ensure 100% compliance of our bond covenants to investors.

The recent improved credit rating, recognized the efforts of the government and provided a stable positive outlook position as a result of "improving financial position resulting from governance improvements, including enhanced transparency and disclosure and budget management; and risks associated with operating a government-owned charter bank." . The administration has also completed the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Debt Management Audit, all required reporting and documentation have been provided to our auditors.

The opportunity to refund our bonds in 2021 is a testament of quality and worthiness that the American Samoa Government and by extension, its people, have demonstrated its fiduciary responsibility and commitment to fulfilling its financial obligations. We believe the infrastructure of our debt-management policies and legislation allows our Administration the flexibility and still maintain the controls to ensure sound financial stewardship of our government debt.

The Administration took advantage of our strengthened government financial position and entered the bond market. We were able to reduce the interest rate on our 2015B & 2015C series through refunding with an overall interest reduction of 10.8% and new revenues to ensure continuity of the Fono building to full completion and other critical infrastructure improvements. The refunding also allowed ASEDA to pay off the Retirement investment 100% of its principal investment of \$11.720 million and collectively earning a total of over \$5 million in interest.

To date, a total of 3 series were issued in the last 6 years, 2015; 2018 and 2021 for a total of \$179,671,420.00 for 22 projects. These investments resolved long standing debts and obligations of the government; road improvements, established a government chartered bank and financial management enforcement, proactive plans to combat the impacts of climate change with renewable energy, protecting our borders from contraband, software and tracking upgrade for our accounting and tracking influx of foreign travelers, capital improvements in the inter-island transportation, shipyard and our hospital, expansion and diversification of our economic development engine - the fastest and only fiber network in the region, a new legislative chambers and offices, new court building for our territory's leaders and begin the process of creating an innovation campus in Tafuna by preparing to relocate the correctional facility.

ASEDA funded projects are fulfilling its intent by generating revenues to support our local collections, several investments are paying back into the general fund and their portion of the debt service. Other investments allow for improvements in the critical areas outlined above and proactive financial management of our accounting system supports improvement in our audits. The larger investments such as the bank and communication technology will take time as it needs to stabilize its operations before paying its portion into the debt service. ASEDA through its memorandums have allowed them 5-6 years to ensure it is established both functionally and successfully. ASEDA's goals are aligned to the Administration's vision and priority, and supports all sectors of the government.

### **Stimulus / EIP / Tax Refunds / Child Tax Credit**

Our territory has been very fortunate in the past year to receive numerous funds as a result of the federal funding to support families during these difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following disbursements throughout the year directly to our people and community provided both direct stimulus or economic impact payments, child tax credit and tax refunds which include the additional child tax credit payments to the families.

Disbursed economic impact payments/stimulus from the CARES Act, Appropriations Act and ARPA EIP programs, the AS Child Tax Credit, and the standard tax refunds with additional child tax disbursed every year have provided tremendous support for our people. A total of over **\$173,012,846.20** were disbursed to the individuals and families.

2020 Cares Act (\$1,200)	\$35,980,145.00
2021 Appropriations Act (\$600)	\$22,886,640.00
2021 ARPA (\$1,400)	\$71,723,473.70
Child Tax Credit	\$27,822,587.50
August, September, December	
Tax Refunds & Additional Child Tax over	\$14,600,000.00
Local Refunds \$5,700,000.00	
Additional CTC \$8,900,000.00	

### **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

With the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act on March 11, 2021, critically needed federal funding was made available for the States, Territories and Tribal Governments to provide assistance and funding in responding to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to contain COVID-19 in their communities, residents and businesses. These Fiscal Recovery Funds build on and expand the support provided to these governments over the last year, including through the

Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocated to every State and Territory has provided once in a generation funding to aid American Samoa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration.

### **Establishment of ARPA Oversight Office**

The ARPA Oversight Office under the purview of the Governor's Office was established under Executive Order 003-2021 on June 22, 2021. The mandate for the ARPA Oversight Office is to ensure adequate oversight for the use of ARPA funds; to ensure ARPA funded projects were eligible; to provide advice and recommendations for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and senior leadership of the American Samoa Government on the use of ARPA funds; to provide the general public updated information on the availability and eligibility of ARPA funds for various community projects; and to ensure all compliance and reporting requirements are met.

### **Development of the American Samoa ARPA Recovery Plan**

The American Samoa ARPA Recovery Plan was developed to provide the most effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration impact on our healthcare and economy. The American Samoa ARPA Recovery Plan includes allocation of funding to meet the diverse needs of all the residents of American Samoa in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency declaration. Among the planned initiatives

are the following: capital investment for a needed medical facility and services on the main island of Tutuila that serves 90%+ of the local population; addressing our deficiencies at the seaport, airport and lacking inter-island transportation that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency declaration; water and broadband infrastructure improvements to provide reliable internet access for work and educational purposes and clean water; and to provide funding alternatives for the business community, affordable housing funding, non-profit and adult care organizations and improvements to public buildings for a safer environment.

### **The American Samoa ARPA Recovery Plan**

The following table summarizes the intended use of ARPA funds in the approved American Samoa ARPA Recovery Plan to respond to the challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration.

The following summary highlights key ARPA plan recovery categories:

Section 602. Use of Funds	Percent Allocated	Total
(a) To respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;	100%	\$479,135,254.00
Capital investment into Healthcare facility	62.61%	\$300,000,000.00
Capital investment into Mental Health facility	5.01%	\$24,000,000.00
Capital investment into DOH Community Centers	4.17%	\$20,000,000.00
Capital investment into Seaport facility	4.17%	\$20,000,000.00
Capital investment into Airport facility	3.13%	\$15,000,000.00
Travel Safe project	1.69%	\$8,100,000.00
ARPA Oversight Office Administration	0.78%	\$3,754,000.00
Repatriation/Quarantine program	2.71%	\$13,000,000.00
Capital investment into inter-island transportation	1.67%	\$8,000,000.00
Capital investment into Public buildings (Social Distancing,	2.50%	\$12,000,000.00
Non-profit Organizations (Hope House, NGO's, etc.)	1.04%	\$5,000,000.00
Affordable Home loan program	1.67%	\$8,000,000.00
Small Businesses loan program	2.09%	\$10,000,000.00
ASG Vaccination Program	0.48%	\$2,281,254.00
Upgrade of communication infrastructure (towers, equipment,	2.09%	10,000,000.00
Available funds for repairs to water distribution system	4.17%	20,000,000.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$479,135,254.00</b>

### Repatriation Program

One of the key initiatives under the Lemanu-Talauaga Administration was to bring our people home. Since February 2021, the repatriation program has resulted in safely returning over 3000 residents. The ARPA funded repatriation program has continued the repatriation efforts under the CARES Act COVID-19 funding. By December 31, 2021, it is estimated that nearly \$10,000,000.00 ARPA funds had been expended on repatriation costs. The repatriation program will continue into the new year to keep our people safe as our healthcare professionals continue their efforts to strengthen our local resiliency to the impact of the COVID-19 virus through increased vaccination rates.

### Vaccination incentive program

The most effective protection against the COVID-19 virus is the COVID-19 vaccination. Given the high rates of noncommunicable diseases in the territory and impact of new variants like the Omicron variant, vaccinations are even more important for providing broader community protection.

The Department of Health and key partners including the Office of Samoan Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Treasury and others have implemented a mass vaccination campaign and numerous incentive programs to help drive the vaccination rate. Since the launch of the vaccination incentive program, over 15,000 doses have been administered and \$1.5 million has been distributed to eligible recipients over a 10-week period. The single dose is nearly 80% of the total population and at the conclusion of the second vaccination program will reach 75% of the total population. The resulting greater vaccination coverage and protection for

the community at large solidifies the use of ARPA funds as American Samoa's direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Small business loan program**

Providing assistance for our local small business's response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was a key initiative under the AS ARPA Recovery Plan. The global inflationary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also had a direct impact on our transportations, shipping, fuel and vendor cost of goods. The Department of Commerce ARPA funded line of credit and loan & Grant programs are designed to provide critical access to capital and funds to address the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Department of Commerce and its banking partners launched its small business assistance program on December 14, 2021 and are currently working with our local businesses to meet the most critical needs of our business community during the COVID-19 pandemic. \$10 million has been allocated to assist our business community.

### **Seaport, Airport and inter-island program**

The center of all commerce activity in American Samoa is located at our lone commercial seaport. The sole airport for all international travel serves as the main lifeline for all travelers and emergency transportation of critical supplies to serve the territory. The only reliable and economically viable option for the transportation of urgent goods and travelers to the outer islands deficiencies has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency declaration.

Investing ARPA funds to ensure these key components of American Samoa's commercial components are able to function during the COVID-19 pandemic are critical to sustaining our commerce activity and cannot be overstated. These critical sites serve every resident and business in American Samoa. Delays as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency protocols impacts every aspect of life and commerce in American Samoa. The Port Authority will begin the design and implementation phase of its plans to strengthen each of these critical components in quarter 1 of 2022. ARPA funds totaling \$44 million have been dedicated to ensuring these critical lifeline facilities and services are able to meet the demands of our business community.

### **Medical services and facility program**

The ARPA funds allocated for the new medical services and facility in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration is the highest priority for the use of ARPA funds. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disparities in healthcare for the residents of American Samoa. The border closing has further exacerbated the lack of access for many of our residents who need critical healthcare services. Investing into our healthcare system is critical for our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency.

The LBJ/TMC and key stakeholders in American Samoa have developed its proposal for the use of \$300 million ARPA funds to address the disparities in our healthcare system in American Samoa.

The ARPA medical services and facility program allocation as follows:

- \$200,000,000.00 new secondary/quarantine medical services and facility to treat acute medical needs and medical services
  - a) Facility to include 40 medical bed facility with all the required ancillary support
  - b) Secondary acute medical facility to provide dedicated facility in response to the COVID-19 and located on the Western side of Tutuila where the majority of the population reside
  - c) Secondary site will have the full medical services as the Fagaalu LBJ/TMC plus new services that have been sorely lacking in American Samoa but has been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration
- \$50,000,000.00 for Fagaalu LBJ/TMC site improvements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration. Responses include:
  - a) Expansion of ICU facility to 16 individual rooms
  - b) Expansion of the Emergency room facility
  - c) Improvements to the plant infrastructure
  - d) Expansion of the Dialysis treatment services and facility
- \$50,000,000.00 for hard to fill healthcare positions
  - a) Hire CMS M.D's, specialized nurses and technicians
  - b) Hire specialized CMS Medical Doctors for new services
  - c) Hire ICU specialists
  - d) Hire specialized nurses and technicians

All remaining ARPA funded programs including home loan program, fortifying public buildings, water and broadband infrastructure projects, mental/behavioral health care, community center healthcare improvements and non-profit funding will be implemented and/or launched during the first quarter of 2022. Each and every project or program is designed and intended to strengthen American Samoa's response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency declaration.

American Samoa faces unprecedented challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the ARPA funds provide incredible support to strengthen our response to this global pandemic. The AS ARPA Recovery Plan when fully implemented will increase our response capabilities especially in these areas directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **Fiscal Responsibility & Accountability**

### **Compliance & OIG Audit**

With the increase in available federal funding to the American Samoa Government, the Administration is concentrating our efforts in assuring that these funds are spent in accordance with federal and local procurement policies and procedures. It is within everyone's obligation to be good stewards of these monies.

Ensuring budgetary compliance is a priority of the Administration. Adjusting cost saving measures will be put in place as a result of any shortfalls or improper expenditures. In January 2021, the Governor issued General Memorandum 010-21 which placed a freeze on pay increases and conversions. It also directed the Director of Human Resources to identify all positions where there was a pay increase or conversion from January 2019 to the end of 2020. This was done to identify the scope of the potential problems with improper pay increases and conversions.

As a result of their initial review the following actions were identified: 220 reclassifications, 2,065 pay adjustments, 405 promotions, 1,464 New Hires-Reinstatement-Emergency Hires, for a total of 4,157 personnel actions potentially non-budgetary compliant and may have been improperly enacted. General Memorandum 028-21 Cost Saving Measures of Personnel Actions was issued in January to address these concerns. Tasks were to identify all personnel actions that took place from January 1, 2019 which have not been in compliance with the law.

General Memorandum 029-21 established the Compliance Review Committee (CRC) and set forth its role and responsibilities. The CRC reviewed expenses related to COVID-19, government contracts, personnel actions and leases or obligations the government entered into from January 1, 2019 to current.

As a result of the CRC review of the personnel actions, corrective action was implemented government wide to address improper classifications. Corrective measures included placing employees at the salary and positions concurrent to budget and organizational chart. Once the compliant action was agreed upon per the budget and department leadership, employees were compensated retroactive to the date of the corrective action.

The CRC was tasked to conduct a thorough review of all government employees to implement the minimum wage increase from \$5.77 to the current federal level of \$7.25. As a result of these reviews, the Administration has been able to make critical changes and implement key initiatives to improve the lives of our government employees. As a result of the CRC's analysis of the government workforce, the Governor issued General Memorandum 121-21 to institute a pay increase for ASG employees that recognized their years of service and increased the minimum wage of government workers. Moreover, an increased level of professionalism and service is expected to better serve our people and community. The Human Resources Director has provided a performance management policy to ensure these objectives are met by conducting quarterly

review of their employee performance with an annual evaluation to concur with appropriate increments.

In December 2021, Executive Order 008-21 was issued establishing a Code of Ethics based on the principles of the Administration, integrity and commitment. Each agency will be required to have an ethics officer assigned to work with the Chief Ethics Officer. Under the executive order, the Territorial Audit Officer is designated as the Chief Ethics Officer. Quarterly training will be provided to the Ethics Officers throughout the Government.

Weekly compliance review meetings have been conducted throughout the year and will continue to ensure the government has complied and instituted corrective measures as these types of non-budgetary concerns and findings arise.

The Governor issued Executive Order 007-21 detailing the expectation and requirements of driving a government vehicle. In line with the inspector general audit of government vehicles, the Administration and directors are directed to complete an inventory of all government vehicles in compliance with the Office of Property Management (OPM). Each Director is responsible for the conduct of vehicles assigned to their agencies; it has also prohibited the use of handheld cellular phones while driving.

The US Department of Education High Risk designation and semiannual reporting is an ongoing audit. The Administration continues to provide the required semiannual reports, and is preparing for the next reporting period and will provide all the required updates and responses to the US Department of Education risk compliance division.

This will be the second year that the Government-wide Audit will be conducted virtually via teleconference. The Administration will continue to be vigilant in this endeavor to resolve our findings and incorporate recommendations for improvements.

### **Association of Pacific Island Public Auditors (APIPA)**

The Territorial Audit Office has worked collaboratively with departments to ensure integral internal controls for the improvement of effectiveness, efficiency of government operations. The Territorial Audit Office is currently conducting 11 audits of various agencies, departments and entities to ensure public funds are utilized for the intended results and it is managed responsibly.

On August 23-September 3, 2021, the Territorial Audit Office virtually hosted the 32<sup>nd</sup> Association of Pacific Island Public Auditors (APIPA) annual conference. The APIPA consists of the following island groups: Guam, Saipan, the Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Kosrae, Yap, the Federated State of Micronesia, Samoa, Fiji and American Samoa.

Of the 688 total conference participants throughout the Pacific, American Samoa produced the highest number of attendances totaling up to 126 participants. Twenty-four ASG departments/agencies and one attendee from the private sector business participated in the two-week training and workshops. Attendees ranged from deputy directors, senior management, auditing, accounting and finance staff and administrative assistants. Participants were given the opportunity to receive up to 40 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) credits, required by government auditing standards for auditors to maintain their professional competency. The training was funded through a technical assistance grant. As a result, 898 course certificates and 2,452 CPE credits were issued by the Graduate School USA and the PITI-VITI organization, who conducted the training.

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# STATE OF HEALTHCARE

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American Samoa remains the only U.S. soil to have zero cases of local transmission of the COVID-19 virus. This remains as American Samoa's residents have sacrificed travel, access to healthcare, education, and business opportunities. American Samoa has a very high rate of non-communicable diseases which places its residents at higher risk to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. American Samoa's leaders have looked to its own history in dealing with pandemics to the global 1917 Spanish flu that ravaged our neighbors to the West and was estimated to have decimated their population by up to ¼ of their population. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the limitations and inequitable access to healthcare, services and treatment for the people of American Samoa.

Improving the health of our people is a top priority of the Administration. While we have made steady progress in our attempts to enhance the quality of healthcare services, much needs to be done to overcome the adverse effects of ongoing systemic challenges and the global pandemic.

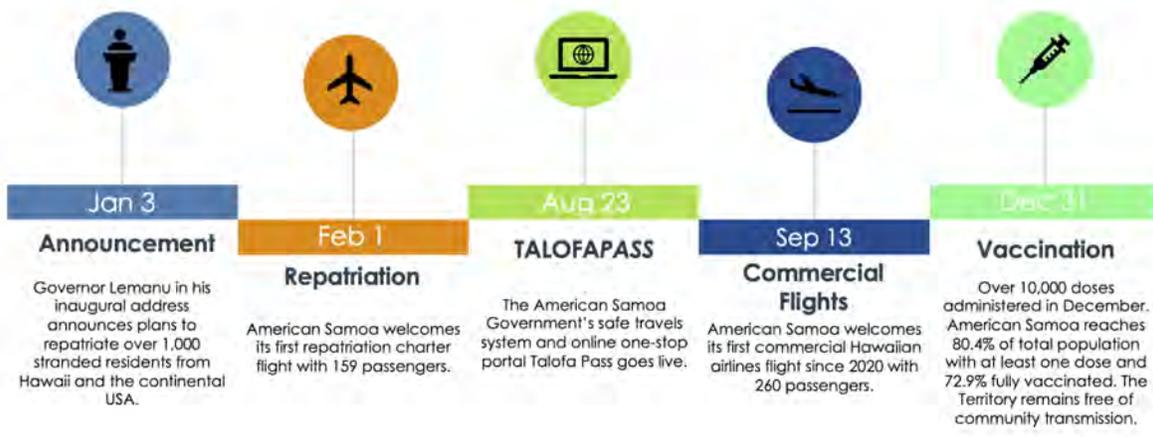
## **COVID-19 Emergency Response (Repatriation, Quarantine, and Vaccination)**

The American Samoa Government has been in a state of emergency operating on CODE blue for over two years facing long standing healthcare workforce challenges and limited healthcare infrastructure. The Border closure since the first Public Health Emergency Declaration in March 2020 has highlighted the deficiencies and limited healthcare capacity available for residents. Our single acute medical facility with only 124 medical beds and 10 ICU beds is dangerously insufficient to address the medical needs of the territory should the COVID-19 virus pandemic reach our shores.

Keeping our borders closed indefinitely is not a long-term solution and has created significant hardship for the local residents as many have been unable to meet their medical needs in the Territory. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the following measures were put into place to ensure American Samoa remains free of community transmission.

## COVID-19 Timeline

The following presents key dates and events throughout the past year of COVID-19 operations in 2021.



### Repatriation

American Samoa closed its borders as its first line of defense against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first days in office, the Lemanu-Talauega Administration announced plans to revisit the Territory's COVID-19 and travel restrictions by repatriating stranded residents. The COVID-19 Task Force was reconvened with over 50 public and private members and is Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Talauega Eleasalo Ale. The COVID-19 Task Force immediately began planning a complex operation consisting of two simultaneous quarantine sites and operational personnel in the State of Hawaii and American Samoa. In February 2021 the American Samoa Government began its repatriation program to safely bring home stranded residents and permit much needed business, medical and military personnel to travel to the territory.

In September 2021, the transition from repatriation charter operations to commercial flights removed the burden of travel booking from the government back to Hawaiian airlines. Lessons learned and after-action reviews of the repatriation phase of COVID-19 travel operations included recommendations for an IT solution to address the inefficiencies experienced by both travelers and government approval departments such as the Department of Health (medical clearances) and the Department of Legal Affairs (travel/immigration clearances). Prior to the TALOFAPASS system, public complaints with the fragmented approach to government requirements and navigating the bureaucracies often left stranded travelers and families frustrated with timely updates regarding their travel status. Departments maintained their own individual websites and portals and travelers were expected to upload different sets of documents. Further, coordination between approval departments and their own unique systems proved daunting and placed additional burdens on government administrators and staff.

## TALOFAPASS

The TALOFAPASS (safe travels) program was a critical component in the plan to begin reopening of our borders and the transition from the Hawaii repatriation program. The TALOFAPASS program was successfully launched to coincide with the first commercial flight in over a year. TALOFAPASS system is the first-of-its-kind Safe Travel program for travelers into American Samoa providing travelers and administrators alike with a one-stop portal for all required entry and medical requirements. Travelers can access and upload all required COVID-19 test results while also minimizing costly quarantine operation expenses in Hawaii. This has ensured that American Samoa maintains the ability to track travelers into the territory and has allowed for vaccination data collection, contact tracing and single site for ease of use by travelers and government oversight to minimize the risk of the virus entering our Territory. The TALOFAPASS system continues to be utilized for all incoming travelers to American Samoa and has been recently expanded to include Fiji repatriation charters and soon travelers between the two Samoas.



## Quarantine

The recommendation from local public health experts and the medical community was to require both pre-travel quarantine and quarantine upon arrival. Such measures would allow for frequent testing and the elimination of active positives from being imported into the Territory as vaccination efforts were still in its early stages. Expedient coordination was critical among key public and private sector leaders in both American Samoa and Hawaii. The ASG Hawaii office took the lead on the coordination of operations with the State of Hawaii government offices. The COVID-19 Task Force of over 60 federal, local, and private leaders coordinated the planning and execution of local operations and payments. The implementation of two concurrent operations was a monumental undertaking and not without its challenges.

In American Samoa, Tradewinds Hotel was the primary quarantine site and later expanded to include sites at Fatu-o-Aiga, Sadies by the Sea, and the Department of Health's Alternate Care Facility to support larger flight operations and the isolation of imported positive cases. In Hawaii, these hotels included White Sands Hotel for the first flight and Waikiki Ohana East Hotel in



subsequent repatriation flights. Following the success of the first repatriation flight, arrangements were made with Waikiki Ohana East Hotel to increase flight capacity and comfortably accommodate travelers and quarantine staff.

With the success of the test flight using the TALOFAPASS system, pre-quarantine program in Hawaii was replaced with the three-test protocol currently in place through our TALOFAPASS safe travel program. This flight also resulted in the Territory's first positive "imported case" and protocols were immediately activated. Positives were imported with subsequent commercial flights and in total, 11 positive cases and numerous historical cases were detected. All asymptomatic positives were successfully contained and isolated for full recovery prior to the safe

discharge into the community. Concurrently, flights to and from the Pacific region were also occurring with travel between Samoa still in place.

A total of 1,830 travelers underwent quarantine in both Hawaii and American Samoa during the repatriation period. During commercial flights, a total of 1,566 travelers were quarantined in American Samoa alone. Thus, the total number of passengers from Hawaii/Continental US passengers that completed quarantine in Hawaii and/or American Samoa is 3,405. The AS Department of Health has reported over 5,400 airport and seaport passengers that have checked in to any one of our local quarantine facilities.

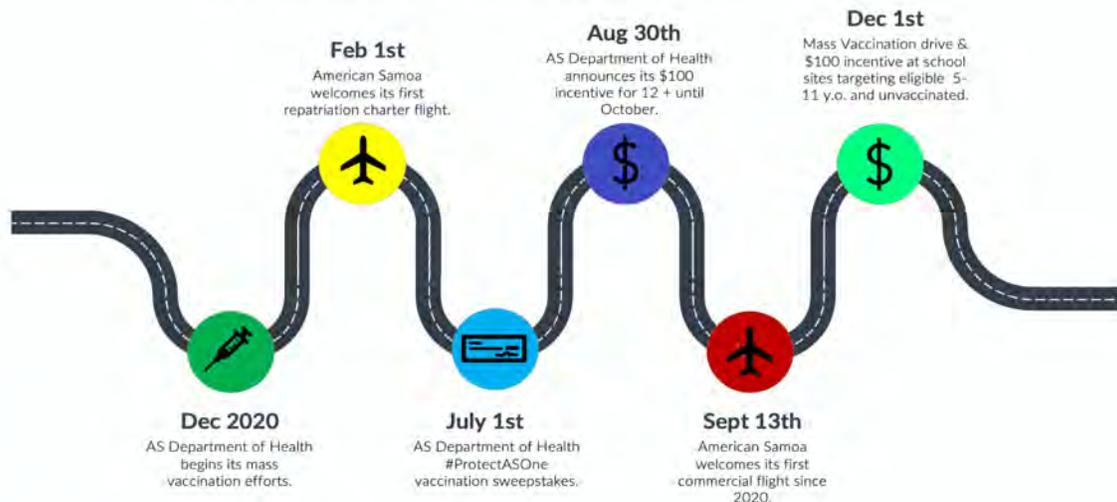


### Vaccination Update & Statistics

In January 2021, a mere 1,045 doses had been administered with the gradual allocation of vaccines across the country. By the end of December 2021, a total of 79,519 doses have since been administered to eligible residents in Tutuila, Aunu'u, and Manu'a. The AS Department of Health's efforts to reach herd immunity (90%) remains a major priority and undertaking.

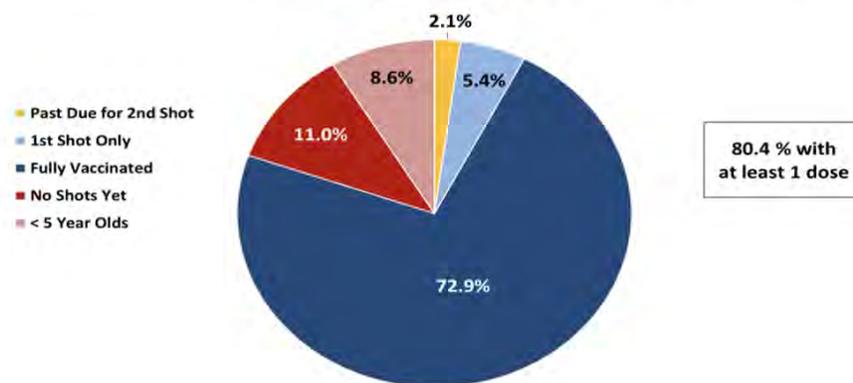
## Roadmap to 90%

The following presents a timeline of mass vaccination incentives in 2021.



After a year of aggressive community and village outreach, multi-media campaigns, incentives and mass vaccination drives, the year ended on a positive note and trend for vaccination coverage. December marked one of the most successful months in terms of turnout for the year. As of January 3, 80.4% of the entire population receiving at least one dose and nearly 72.9% being fully vaccinated.

Estimated COVID-19 Vaccine TOTAL Population Coverage (Am. Samoa 2020 Population by Village, US Census N=49,710), Am. Samoa COVID-19 Vaccination Program, January 3, 2022



The AS Department of Health has since begun the new year by resuming vaccination campaigns to reach our goal of 90% fully vaccinated. Travel restrictions may change and look a little differently as we move closer to our goals; however, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to keep American Samoa safe and protected. Our Government leaders and COVID-19 Task Force look forward to continuing upon progress made by heeding the advice and recommendations of our medical community while also being mindful of the long-term financial sustainability of our government resources and strains on the workforce. More importantly, we strongly encourage every eligible resident of our Territory to make the responsible choice to get vaccinated or to get a booster for the protection of themselves, our families, and the most vulnerable of our island community.

Repatriation, Quarantine and Vaccination initiatives have proven successful. Both local and federal funds of over \$33,295,548.66 million were well spent supporting these public health response efforts. As a result, we have successfully authorized and vetted the entry of approximately 5,500 travelers (residents, visitors, guest workers and skilled healthcare resources) from January 3, 2021 to December 15, 2021 from the US Mainland to include Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand and within the region. Of the funds spent, over 63% or \$20,940,958.61 million went directly to various local private businesses that provided support and services to our initiatives, and 37% or \$12,354,590.05 spent on off-island vendors. Most importantly, we have successfully safeguarded our island home and community from the COVID-19 virus.

*\*For a more detailed analysis on the AS COVID response, a "2021 Covid Task Force Operations Report" is forthcoming.*

## Department of Health

Over the past year, a wide range of initiatives has been advanced to optimize and improve the health and well-being of newcomers and residents in various areas such as cancer screening, population health, aging community, chronic disease management, and mental health, also noncommunicable diseases. Throughout the year the Department worked diligently to achieve the

strategic goals in the areas of Quality and Safety, Improved Access and Increased Efficiency, Population Health and Demographics, and the delivery of Health and Community Services.

### **Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program**

Breast and Cervical Cancer (BCCEDP) has started clinical screening for women of ages 40 and older for Breast Cancer. The mammogram machine at LBJ is in operation and fully functional with providing mammograms for women getting screened through the program.



### **Community Health Center (CHC)**

- Received funding totaling \$725,5687 from HRSA - American Rescue Plan Act for Health Center Infrastructure support. This funding covers construction, expansion, alteration, renovation, and other capital improvements and expands Health Care infrastructure. The project runs from September 15, 2021, to September 14, 2024.
- Received funding for the Health Center of \$3,064,625 for a period of 2 years to March 31, 2020. These funds are to support COVID-19 Vaccination Capacity, Response, Treatment, Maintaining and Increasing capacity, Recovery, and Stabilization including minor alteration/renovation and any related activities under the Health Center.
- The Health Center continues in the final year of the 3-year cycle of the \$3,151,000 awarded as base funding each year, December 2021 will be the submission of another non-competing continuation (NCC) application for the year 2022 for the operation of the Health Center Program.
- Federal Communications Commission funding was awarded for \$187,297 to reimburse costs to support telehealth services in response to COVID-19 Pandemic.
- CHC completed the virtual annual Uniform Data System (UDS) training held on October 28", 12th, & 264, 2021. Up to 10 staff members registered and attended.
- Recruitment of four physicians, four lab workers, one dentist, and one dietician is currently in the works. All paperwork is with the ASG Personnel for their employment contract to be issued.
- The Community Health Center (CHC) completed the Virtual Operation Site Visit (OSV) from June to July 2021. It was a successful one as a result, The CHC was given an 82% mark for program compliance. The 18% unmet requirements consisted of the Governing Board, Clinical, Quality Improvement pieces that have been resolved as well. Currently placed on the HRSA's decision and final determination of the CHC 100% compliance after their program review.
- Data Unit identifying missed opportunities for Medicaid reimbursements and realigning services to ensure clinicians are reimbursed for their services. The data department has been actively working since May of 2021 to identify an EHR system that aligns with the mission and services of the health center and public health. A system has been identified that is cost-efficient, HIPAA compliant, and comprehensive. More importantly, once purchased, this system will solely belong to the CHC, a huge step towards improving reporting and data quality for the CHC.
- The 340-B discounted medication program under the Community Health Centers has afforded more than 150 Rheumatic Heart Disease patients to receive Bicillin medication for free. The CHC is an eligible entity under this federal discount program and since its

enrollment in 2018, more than 50 new patients have established their care for RHD at the primary care clinic. Also, under the 340-B program are free Nicotine Replacement Products available to adults 18 years and older who are referred from the CHC primary clinic and interested in smoking cessation. This referral allows an individual patient from the CHC to enroll in the Tobacco Cessation Clinic when they undergo 8 weeks of counseling in combination with free Nicotine Replacement products.

### **Nursing Pay Raise**

The Department of Health's Nursing Division's Reclassification Proposal for their Nurses and CNAs was approved by the Compliance Review Committee (CRC) on Friday, October 29, 2021.

### **Emergency Preparedness & Response**

The DOH Emergency Preparedness & Response Programs are to strengthen territorial public health preparedness and response capabilities through a continuous cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action.

Information Management capability was improved greatly through enhanced interoperable systems and expanded communications resources. Information management is a critical component in all emergency preparedness because it allows leadership to receive critical information that is the basis for instantaneous better and informed decision making. Decisions that have an impact on the territory as a whole. ASDOH has its own frequency that allows them to operate separately from other government agencies.

ASDOH has acquired a vast amount of communications equipment that has allowed for Public Health Information Management and Incident Command Management to excel compared to 10 years ago. Currently, DOH has the following comms resources: 6 communications repeaters: one on Ofu and 5 on Tutuila. 4 base radios that are located in each community health center (Tafuna, Leone, Tau, and Ofu) 50 handheld radios that are supporting the COVID response operations for all quarantine sites, vaccination activities and resource management.

### **Immunization Program**

1. Established COVID Pandemic Vaccination Response Plan
2. Established COVID-19 Registry System-Cloud Based
3. Granted 3.1 million for Immunization Program Operations
4. Initiated COVID Call Center to ensure Reminder & Recall Operations
5. Ensure Cold Chain for Vaccination is intact-Web-Based System connected

### **Helping Babies Hear Program (Early Hearing Detection and Intervention)**

This program provides hearing screenings for all newborns prior to discharge from LBJ hospital as well as outpatient follow-up for any newborn who does not pass their initial hearing screening. HBH also provides diagnostic audiological evaluations for newborns/toddlers in need of further testing if the follow-up hearing screenings are not a pass. The diagnostic audiological evaluations conducted by an Audiologist will determine whether a newborn/toddler has congenital or acquired hearing loss. HBH partnered with the Part C program, Helping Hands, to provide further support through speech and language services. 537 newborn hearing screenings completed prior to

discharge from LBJ Hospital in 2021. A MOA between HBH/DOH and LBJ signed by DOH Director and LBJ CEO Deaf Awareness Month activities allowed American Samoa to celebrate with the rest of the world. The Lemanu-Talauuga Administration marked the first time American Samoa has participated in an Audiologist contract. In addition, Audiological evaluations are now taking place for children since the closure of borders in 2019.



## Lyndon Baines Johnson Tropical Medical Authority and Plan for New Hospital

While the Lyndon Baines Johnson Tropical Medical Authority has made continuous efforts to address challenges faced by the hospital's 50-year-old single-story facility for infrastructure maintenance, renovation, critical repairs, and the lack of qualified personnel to meet staffing needs, investing in a new medical facility and increasing our basic response capacity will provide American Samoa adequate response capabilities. Developing adequate quarantine facilities will allow American Samoa to reopen with the knowledge that the needed facilities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and future public health emergency declaration protocols.

Improving healthcare is a priority for this Administration, and the recent ARPA allocation of \$300,000,000 to the American Samoa Government to design and build a new hospital in Tafuna; continue with upgrades and expansions of the existing LBJ Hospital is a monumental step forward in improved healthcare as promised to our people. These funds represent an important and much-needed development in what will be a lengthy and ongoing effort.

A modernized hospital with high-performing building infrastructure that improves the overall patient experience and provides safe and effective solutions for staff is a top priority for the Administration. The goal is to maximize the investment in infrastructural capacity with well-informed evaluation and decision-making to provide the greatest resiliency for change and capacity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. LBJ/TMC as the designated Authority is in the final stages of developing their proposal for the new medical services and facility in the Tafuna area, improvements to the Fagaalu hospital site, and personnel costs to hire for critical medical services sorely needed in American Samoa. The new hospital is proposed to be built at or near the present location of the Territorial Correctional Facility in Tafuna.

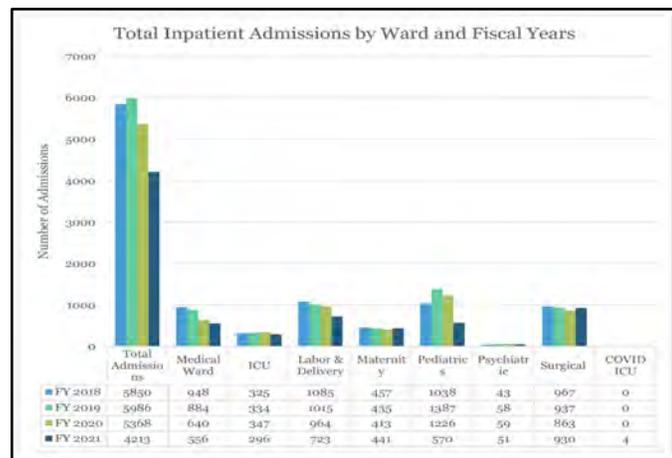


Lyndon Baines Johnson Tropical Medical Authority reports the following for year 2021:

### HOSPITAL UTILIZATION DATA

OVERALL HOSPITAL UTILIZATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 - 2021	
Total Discharges	4,224
Average Charge per Discharge	\$1,600
Total Patient Days Care to Patients Discharged	25,469 Days
Average Length of Stay (days)	6.0 Days

IN-PATIENT UTILIZATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 - 2021	
Total Admissions FY 2020 - 2021	4,213
Intensive Care Unit (ICU)	296
Medical Ward	556
Nursery	642
Labor & Delivery	723
Maternity	441
Pediatrics	570
Psychiatric	51
Surgical	930
COVID ICU	4



OUTPATIENT UTILIZATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 - 2021	
Total Admissions FY 2020 - 2021	117,865
Emergency Room	32,052
Pediatric Clinic	7,328
Medical Clinic	14,258
Surgical Clinic	5,249
Orthopedic Clinic	4,626
ENT Clinic	2,850
Eye Clinic	3,157
OB/Gyn Clinic	7,007
Dental Clinic	12,715
Family Planning	2,232
Renal Dialysis	24,019
Mental Health	2,372



## **Pharmacy 2021**

The Pharmacy, as part of the LBJ vaccine task force, has been partnering with the Department of Health (DOH) in storing, delivering, and vaccinating staff and the public. The pharmacist's role as a vaccine educator enhances patient adherence in preventing COVID-19. Success vaccination for LBJ is approximately 98% of LBJ employees fully vaccinated.

## **Infection Prevention**

1. Modern Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Purchases of PAPR by 3m that protect healthcare workers that are greatly exposed to aerosolized pathogens causing acute respiratory infections (example: Covid-19, Measles, and Tuberculosis)
  - Training different departments on wearing their PPE enables them to work comfortably in critical areas when needed
  - Revising multiple policies and procedures that gears towards protecting the patients and healthcare workers by stopping the spread of infection inside the hospital
2. Ensuring the new Covid-19 unit is able to handle patients and keep the healthcare workers safe.
3. Employee health is updated by offering all the LBJ Staff a Covid-19 vaccinations.

## **Rehabilitation (Physical Therapy)**

- Telehealth certification courses completed for Rehab Management
- Staff PTs are currently working on telehealth certification

## **Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) Telehealth Training Program**

- Awarded USDA grant to purchase needed equipment for the Maternal Fetal Medicine Telehealth services
- Awarded TAP grant for needed training and consulting from specialized physicians and team members to implement the MFM Telehealth Program
- Innovative solution to increase access to basic and subspecialty prenatal care for pregnant women through Telehealth medicine
- Project will offer needed training for LBJTMC OB/GYN physicians, nurses and support staff

## **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Maintenance & responder Training Project (2021)**

Awarded funds to purchase new EMS vehicles, and provide maintenance, EMS responder, and support staff training.

## **Maintenance and Life Safety Training Project - 2021**

1. Awarded funds for the Life Safety Codes Training
  - This project will address the need for health care facilities to meet the requirements of CMS Conditions of Participation by enhancing the Safety Office program for the hospital
  - Training will be in the area of Life Safety Codes and Fire Safety Training for the Safety Office

### **Nurses & Healthcare Support Staff Training**

To support U.S. nursing license training for identified employed nurses and identified support staff, refresher courses for licensing exams are offered to assist with the nursing shortage and professional development for support staff.

Funding Source(s): Department of Interior – Office of Insular Affairs (DOI-OIA)

Awarded TAP: \$163,847.00

### **Revenue Cycle and Remediation Service Training**

This training will facilitate and expedite training for identified users of the Openvista InsightCS and Carevue system for financial accountability and clinical documentation.

Funding Source(s): Department of Interior – Office of Insular Affairs (DOI-OIA)

Awarded TAP: \$234,080.00

### **Infrastructure & Facilities**

Received funding assistance to move forward with needed projects for expansion of the hospital and services.

### **Completed Projects**

- COVID-19 Negative Pressure ICU Unit
- New Finance Building
- New Engineering and Medical Supply Building
- New Storage Structure 40ft x 60ft
- Installation of one New Boiler
- Installation of one New Chiller
- Purchase MRI Unit
- Design for two-story parking lot

### **Ongoing Projects**

- OR/Labor Delivery Phase II
- Renovation of new MRI space
- New HR Building
- Design for Doctors Housing (location – Public Health)
- New Hospital Facility in Tafuna
- Pharmacy Clean Room project

## **Medicaid State Plan Changes**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services (CMS) approved two State Plan Amendments (SPA) in FY2021:

- After several months of data collection, research, and negotiating rates with CMS, Hope House was approved as a Medicaid Eligible Provider in March 2021 with a retroactive reimbursement date of October 2022. The payment methodology approved for Hope House

is through Personal Care Aide services and Long-Term Care Support Services. Medicaid has reimbursed \$108,900 to Hope House to date.

- In assisting the American Samoa Government with its repatriation efforts, the Medicaid Director and staff worked diligently with CMS to approve the Disaster Relief SPA in April 2021 with retroactive payments March 2020. Medicaid has reimbursed a total of \$1,858,074.68 to DOH (hotels/accommodations for Medicaid eligible travelers), US Renal Care (for AS residents dialysis patients), and Capture Diagnostics (COVID testing for returning AS residents). The Medicaid office continues to wait on invoices and documentation for additional reimbursements to ASG that may be available.

The Medicaid Office received official notice from CMS that they have approved the request for the AS Disaster Relief SPA waiving conditions for enrollment in Hawaii and AS, to deal with the medical costs for ALL AS residents, and eligible hotel and meals costs for our Medicaid referral patients. This is temporary until the end of the Public Health Emergency as declared by the federal government.

**List of Temporary Medicaid Eligible Providers During PHE**

<b>Provider Name</b>	<b>Provider Location</b>
Hope Dialysis	Tafuna, Am. Samoa
US Renal Care	Honolulu, HI
Capture Diagnostics	Honolulu, HI
Diagnostic Laboratory Services	Honolulu, HI

### **2021 NAMD Spotlight Award**

On November 14, the National Association of Medicaid Directors awarded the American Samoa Medicaid program its annual Spotlight Award. “We are pleased to share that American Samoa is one of the winners of NAMD’s 2021 Spotlight Award. We received five inspiring submissions this year, and the review committee, comprised of four directors, selected American Samoa's work on repatriating and supporting members through the COVID-19 pandemic. They were impressed by the depth and breadth of the effort undertaken in American Samoa as well as the leadership you and your team showed. Your leadership is an example for other states that have to

lead through new and unique challenges as we continue to manage through the COVID-19 pandemic and PHE unwinding.”

### **Health Information Technology EHR Incentive Payments**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentive Programs provide financial incentives for the “meaningful use” of certified EHR technology to improve patient care. To receive an EHR incentive payment, providers must show that they are “meaningfully using” their EHRs by meeting thresholds for several objectives. In 2016, the Medicaid Health Information Technology (HIT) division received a handful of applications from FQHC physicians. Between October 2016 and October 2021, a total of \$357,000 of 100% federal funding was awarded to all approved physicians. FY2022 is the last year for the EHR Meaningful Use Incentive program.

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## Department of Human & Social Services

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating to all the 50 states and 4 territories of the United States, American Samoa continues to be the only U.S. jurisdiction without any locally transmitted cases of the coronavirus. Nevertheless, our people's lives have dramatically changed in many ways because of the global pandemic. The number of people served and the amount of money received and administered in 2021 increased rapidly. The Department of Human and Social Services (DHSS) introduced new programs and services to assist our clients and people as promptly and effectively as possible.

By the end of 2021, DHSS will have served almost 31,000 adults and children and injected close to \$30 million in client benefits and payments into our local economy. And, almost 12,000 are served each month through various DHSS programs.

DHSS is completely funded by federal grants with an average annual budget of \$24 million for the past several years, until this last year when they received an additional \$11.5 million in COVID-19 funding. In 2021, in addition to DHSS's regular funding for the ASNAP, ASWIC, Behavioral Health Services (BHSD), Child Care, Children and Family Services, Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) and other ongoing programs and services, DHSS also received \$74.5 million in COVID-19 funds to provide individuals and families with targeted services and support in dealing with the negative impact of the pandemic, such as (1) food assistance for individuals whose jobs were affected by the pandemic such as those in the travel, hospitality and related industries; (2) food assistance for students in kindergarten to grade 12 who lost access to free School Lunch Program meals at school due to school closure or reduced school hours or days due to the pandemic; (3) expansion of child care services especially for essential critical infrastructure workers and first responders who must work extended hours; (4) expansion of mental health and substance use treatment and prevention services for our community; (5) conversion of ASNAP benefits from food coupons to an Electronic Benefits Transfer system (EBT cards); and (6) a one-time cash benefit for needy families with young children in mixed immigration households to pay for utilities, emergency food purchases or other critical needs.

DHSS's achievements for the year 2021 have been transformative for our Territory and included several services that became available for the first time in American Samoa for various segments of our community. With all the services provided in 2021 combined, DHSS impacted the lives of every family in American Samoa.

For the first time in American Samoa's history, DHSS (1) transformed American Samoa's public transportation system for persons with disabilities and seniors by signing up 20 aiga bus owners to designate the front row seats of 61 aiga buses as reserved seating for persons with disabilities and seniors; (2) established a 9-8-8 Suicide and Mental Health Helpline and Crisis Call Center that is open 24/7; (3) transformed the child care industry by establishing the first 24/7 child care center to serve not just parents who work during the day but also healthcare workers, first responders and other essential critical infrastructure workers who work after-hours; increased child care providers

from 24 in 2020 to 111 in 2021 and ensured that child care workers are paid wages above minimum wage; (4) participated in the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT) to provide food assistance for school children who lost access to free meals at school because of the pandemic; (5) provided food assistance benefits to self-employed individuals and workers who were laid off, furloughed or on reduced working hours because of the pandemic; (6) will soon authorize local restaurants to accept ASNAP food coupons for meals for the elderly, blind and disabled; and (7) authorized the purchase of taro, green bananas, breadfruit and local hydroponic produce using Cash Value Voucher/Benefits (CVV/B) issued by the ASWIC Program for fruits and vegetables.

**Assistance for People with Disabilities and Seniors:**

**Reserved Seating on Public Transportation** - In building an inclusive community for persons with disabilities and seniors, for the first time in history, DHSS through a DDPC-funded project, was successful in transforming American Samoa’s public transportation system by signing up 20 owners of 61 buses to designate the front seats of their buses as, “reserved seating for persons with disabilities and seniors” using sticker decals. Placards are also affixed to the front dashboard and/or windshield of the 61 buses designating them as, “Priority Seating Available”.

**Prevent and Investigate Elder Abuse** - To safeguard and protect seniors from becoming victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, we executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Territorial Administration on Aging on July 12, 2021 to collaborate in identifying, preventing and investigating neglect, abuse, and exploitation of seniors; develop uniform data collection procedures; and promote social change in American Samoa through education and appropriate actions.

**Restaurants to Accept ASNAP Food Coupons** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) approved DHSS’s request dated May 31, 2021, to authorize select restaurants to accept ASNAP food coupons. This now allows ASNAP recipients, who are low-income elderly, blind, and disabled to enjoy a meal in our local restaurants using their ASNAP benefits.

**Increased ASNAP Benefit Levels** - Close to 4,400 persons with disabilities and seniors are now receiving increased ASNAP monthly food stamp benefits, which started October 1, 2021.

**Increase Vaccination Access for Persons with Disabilities** - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living awarded DHSS’ Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) with a grant of \$13,092 to create opportunities to increase access to COVID-19 vaccinations for people with disabilities. For example, we co-sponsored the Be a Hero Vaccinate Family Fun Day that promoted vaccination for eligible residents including individuals with disabilities, where 231 people were vaccinated. The DDPC secured two Project Move buses that transported over 60 participants.

**Targeted Food Assistance Programs:**

**Emergency Benefit Allotments** - The USDA FNS approved our proposed state plan dated March 4, 2021, to establish a short-term \$2.4 million COVID SNAP program to temporarily increase monthly benefit levels to \$187 per person for all ASNAP and COVID NAP recipients for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2021. Over 4,500 recipients of the two programs received seven months of additional emergency benefit allotments from March to September 2021.

**Increase in ASNAP Monthly Benefits** - The USDA FNS approved our request dated September 2, 2021, to increase monthly food stamp benefits for close to 4,400 ASNAP recipients from \$59 to \$94; \$71 to \$109; \$89 to \$127; \$111 to \$149 and \$139 to \$177 starting October 1, 2021.

**End of Fiscal Year Benefits for ASNAP Recipients** - The USDA FNS approved our request dated August 30, 2021, to use unspent ASNAP monies from Fiscal Year 2021 to issue end-of-year benefits of \$245 too close to 4,400 ASNAP recipients in September 2021.

**End of Fiscal Year Benefits for ASNAP and COVID NAP Recipients** - The USDA FNS approved our request dated August 30, 2021, to use unspent COVID NAP monies from Fiscal Year 2021 to issue end-of-year benefits of \$158 to over 4,500 COVID NAP and ASNAP recipients in September 2021.

**Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program** - The USDA FNS approved a joint \$7,420,085 proposal from DHSS and the Department of Education dated August 12, 2021, to

establish the American Samoa Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT) to provide food assistance for children who lost access to free meals at school from the National School Lunch Program due to school closure, or reduced attendance or hours of their schools during School Year 2020-2021 due to the pandemic.

**Taro, Green Bananas, Breadfruit, and Local Hydroponic Produce Added to WIC Foods-** The USDA FNS approved our request dated May 5, 2021 to include taro, green bananas, breadfruit, and local hydroponic produce to the ASWIC authorized food list. These local foods can now be purchased using ASWIC's Cash Value Voucher/Benefits (CVV/B).

**Mobile ASWIC Clinic for Remote Villages** - The USDA FNS approved our proposal of \$98,000 dated June 28, 2021 to purchase a van to be used as a fully equipped mobile clinic to expand access to ASWIC services for residents in remote villages.

**Assistance for Children, Families, Victims of Crime, as well as Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness:**

**Services for Children, Families and the Community** - The Children and Family Services Division (CFSD) focuses its services on the safety and protection of children and promotion of stable and self-sufficient families through a wide array of services that include child protective services;

adoption, foster care and guardianship; emergency shelters for victims of crimes, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness; child welfare services; and adult protective services. Between January and November, CFSD provided the following services to American Samoa's children, families, and community.

<b>Programs/Services</b>	<b>Individuals/Families Served</b>
Adoption	139
Adult Protective Services (e.g., elder abuse or neglect, domestic violence, etc.)	130
Child Protective Services (e.g., Domestic violence, abuse or neglect, etc.)	309
AIGA Care (e.g., foster care placement of children with family members)	60
Crisis Intervention (e.g., shelter for victims of crime)	160
Emergency Solutions (e.g., shelter and rental assistance for individuals and families experiencing homelessness)	141
<b>Total individuals and families served from January to November</b>	<b>931</b>

**New and Improved Location for the Manaia Children's Shelter** - Through a grant from the Department of Commerce, the CFSD purchased a \$220,000 house and property in Malaeimi Valley, where the Manaia Children's Shelter will be relocated to from its current location at the Lyon's Park. This new property will provide better and improved housing for children who are victims of domestic violence and related crimes.

**Homeless Management Information System** – The CFSD established the first American Samoa Uniform Resource Locator for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that went live on January 20, 2021, capturing data for the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program that serves individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness.

**Cash Assistance for Extremely Low-Income Families** - The CFSD was awarded \$494,816 on June 11, 2021 in Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds (PEAF) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. DHSS will use this grant to provide a one-time cash payment to extremely low-income families for utilities, emergency food purchases, or other critical needs. Eligible families will receive \$200 per child for up to 4 children. This will be implemented in January 2022.

**Child Care Assistance for Low-Income Families** - The Child Care Division (CCD) helps families gain and maintain economic self-sufficiency by subsidizing child care assistance to qualifying low-income parents so that they can continue to work, attend school or an approved training program that increases job skills and promotes professional advancement, or actively seek employment. We also work with providers to reach and maintain standards for healthier, safer and

more nurturing child care services for all children. The chart below illustrates the average number of families and children CCD subsidized child care services for each month from January to December:

Type of Provider	Families	Children
Child Care Center	Average of 843/month	Average of 1,310/ month
Family Child Care Home	Average of 8/month	Average of 10/month
In-Home Child Care	Average of 73/month	Average of 136/month
<b>Total</b>	Approximately 925/month	Approximately 1,500/month

**Significant Expansion and Improvements to Child Care Services** - The CCD accomplished the following significant expansion and improvements for child care services:

**More Child Care Providers** - Increased the number of child care providers from 24 in 2020 to 111 child care providers today, including a center by the LBJ Tropical Medical Center that offers 24/7 child care services (30 Centers, 3 Family Child Care Homes, 78 In-Home);

**More In-Home Child Care Providers** - Increased the number of in-home providers to 78 which targets essential critical infrastructure area workers who are subject to non-traditional work hours and/ or 24/7 work schedules;

**Increased Subsidies for Providers** - Increased provider monthly payment rates from \$200 to \$600 for children in child care centers and family child care settings;

**Successful Job Creation** - Created over 450 jobs funded through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

**Improved Wages for Provider Workers** - Improved wages for employees working in child care centers/family child care homes. As of October 1, 2021, the minimum wage for employees of a child care setting was increased to \$5.40, but 64% of employees in child care centers/ family child care homes are earning \$5.50 or more.

**Payment of Monthly Teacher Stipends** - Provided supplemental stipends to qualifying teachers in center and family child care settings who work at least 75% of their scheduled hours each month. For 2021, an average of 171 teachers each month qualified for stipends, averaging a total of over \$34,300 disbursed each month.

### **Behavioral/Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention**

**Services for Individuals and Families** - The Behavioral Health Services Division (BHSD) provides treatment and counseling programs for individuals experiencing issues with behaviors, mental health, and/or substance use disorder through the Community Mental Health Services(CMHS), Substance Abuse Treatment Services (SATS), and the State Opioid Response (SOR) Project.

CMHS and SATS deliver treatment or counseling services while the SOR project is responsible for conducting drug abuse screening on individuals referred for a substance use-related issue or behavior(s). The BHSD provided the following services between January and November:

<b>Program/Services</b>	<b>Individuals Served</b>
Community Mental Health Treatment Services	440
Substance Abuse Treatment Services	335
Individuals Screened for the State Opioid Response Program (Duplicative)	461
Individuals Who Screened as Positive for Stimulant Use Disorder	21
<b>Total individuals served from January to November (Unduplicated)</b>	<b>796</b>

**American Samoa 9-8-8 Suicide and Mental Health Call Center** – In January 2021, DHSS partnered with the Department of Health (DOH) to successfully apply for a \$135,000 9-8-8 State Planning Grant from Vibrant, the organization responsible for oversight of the national suicide hotline. The grant initiated a partnership between DHSS and DOH, to establish and launch the local 9-8-8 Suicide and Mental Health Helpline and Crisis Call Center in April 2021. Thirty-two (32) individuals employed with DHSS, DOH, and selected non-profit organizations, were trained in suicide prevention, assessment, and crisis response as a crisis call center operator. Currently, the American Samoa 9-8-8 Suicide and Mental Health Helpline continues to operate with 24-hour/7 days/week coverage through the ongoing partnership between DHSS and DOH with advisory support from the American Samoa Suicide Prevention Taskforce or 9-8-8 Coalition.

**Addiction Counselor Certification** – From March-May 2021, the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) certified two DHSS substance abuse counselors as Certified Addiction Counselor II. Beginning May 2021, BHSD and the DOH Behavioral Health Services initiated a partnership to develop counselor certification for behavioral health counselors under the authority of the American Samoa Health Regulatory Board. Through guidance and consultation from NAADAC, counselor certification by-laws, standards, criteria, exam development, exam preparation, certifying, and training will be developed and established for American Samoa. Efforts have also begun to draft an amendment to the American Samoa Code Annotated Chapter 10 § 31.1001 to include the licensing of addiction counselors in the territory.

**Wellness and Nutrition Education for Clients with Severe Mental Illness** - DHSS was approved for \$150,000 from the National Association of Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) for the Transfer Transformation Initiative (TTI) to promote multiple phases of change for individuals with severe mental illness diagnoses. Through TTI, BHSD is partnering with the American Samoa Community College Community and Natural Resources to provide physical wellness coaching and nutrition education for clients for one year. In addition, the TTI program will contract a person in recovery or with lived mental health experience to serve as a Peer Coach throughout the 12-month duration of the TTI program.

**Community Prevention and Awareness Activities** - The Special Projects and Community Assistance (SPCA) Division received \$64,959 in COVID-19 supplemental funding to conduct community prevention and education activities with an emphasis on “risk messaging” using text and other effective messaging strategies and conduct a survey to identify barriers to accessing prevention and other support services during the COVID-19 pandemic. SPCA prevention services will work with BHSD and related stakeholders to address identified gaps.

**Enhancing Environmental Prevention Strategies** - SPCA also received \$56,101 in COVID-19 supplemental funding to enhance our primary prevention infrastructure with a focus on environmental prevention strategies for positive changes to written and unwritten community norms, standards, and attitudes. These social changes will continue to decrease the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

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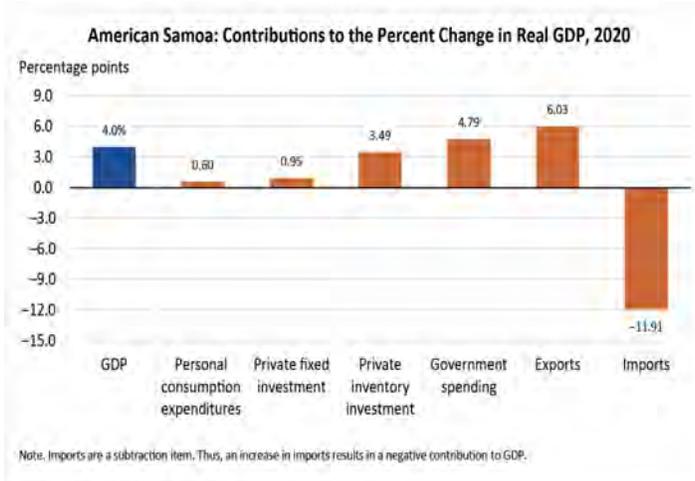
# STATE OF THE ECONOMY

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## Economic Indicators

### *Gross Domestic Product (GDP)*

American Samoa's economy has had its share of hard hits as a result of the Coronavirus global pandemic, but the fact that our island Territory remains COVID-19 free since its state of public health emergency in early 2020, key economic measures such as the Gross Domestic Product



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

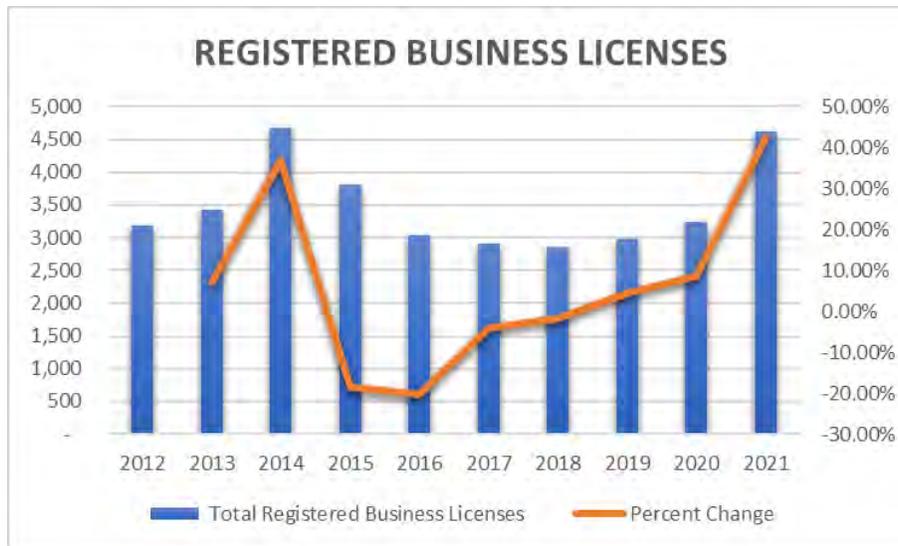
(GDP) revealed how American Samoa's 2019 GDP declined by 0.6 percent, but had a significant increase by 4 percent in 2020 according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The increase in real GDP reflected widespread growth among the major components of GDP including exports, private inventory investment, and government spending.

These increases were partly offset by an increase in imports, which is a subtraction item in the calculation of GDP. Activity related to the tuna canning industry was a significant source of growth in the

American Samoa economy. The canning industry's operations in American Samoa were less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to other parts of the world. Exports of goods increased by 15.5 percent, reflecting an increase in exports of canned tuna and related products. Private inventory investment increased, reflecting growth in supplies held by the tuna canning industry. Government spending increased 10.1 percent; the increase was accounted for by growth in territorial government spending. Spending by the American Samoa government was supported by federal grant revenues, including Coronavirus Relief Fund payments. Clearly, the increase in exports and government spending are key drivers of the increasing GDP rate. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis will not reveal the results of its 2021 analysis until the end of year 2022. Notwithstanding, based on the assessment of economic activities, we are anticipating that the upward trend beginning in 2020 will continue.

### *Calendar Year 2021 Registered Business Licenses*

As of December 31st, 2021 approximately 4,616 business licenses were issued for Calendar Year 2021, and an increase by 42.51% of businesses in American Samoa. This is a record high for registered business licenses on island, and a significant increase in our Territorial business growth for 2021. (Illustrated below)



This positive trend is a result of contributing factors including a streamlined business licensing process (online and in-person), improved joint-agency enforcement measures, and newly developed industries through federally funded programs during these challenging times of the global pandemic. An online portal for anyone to apply or renew a business license to set up shop in American Samoa was launched at the beginning of FY2022. The online application process has made it more convenient for business owners here and abroad to register in a timely manner. Applying for a business license in American Samoa is now available on the Department of Commerce website to anyone across the globe to apply.

Improvements in enforcement work enabled us to spot-check 211 business licenses on a routine and/or unannounced business inspection in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH) - Environmental Health Services Division (EHSD) on non-compliant food establishments and non-compliant business activities. This year, the DOC conducted joint inspections with the Department of Health to shut down and enforce American Samoa's business laws for over 34 business establishments and 59 business licenses. Our joint enforcement efforts have generated more revenues. Our goal is to hold all local businesses accountable for their service(s) to the people of American Samoa and in accordance with the law.

Furthermore, DOC has been working closely with the Office of Legal Affairs' Consumer Protection Bureau (CPB) to handle customer complaints on price gouging and selling of over-the-counter medication without FDA approval. This joint effort with the CPB is well within the guidelines and restrictions set forth in the territory's current State of Public Health Emergency declaration.

### ***Consumer Price Index (CPI)***

The American Samoa Consumer Price Index (CPI) is designed to measure changes in prices of commodities and services normally purchased by the consuming community. The American Samoa CPI (like the U.S. CPI) is based on the concept of representative "market basket," a sample of goods and services that the consumer purchases. The Department of Commerce has completed its quarterly CPI releases for the year, which has revealed an increasing cost in goods, especially food across the Territory.

***Inflation***

The latest CPI release for FY2021-3rd Quarter indicated a 5.1% inflation rate in American Samoa, and is expected to climb again up until the end of 2021. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic certainly play a role in driving this inflation rate on island due to high shipping costs and delays, shortage in manufacturing supplies and our reliance on imported goods.

**Job Creation and Retention**

Job creation and retention is part of our economic growth and stability. American Samoa has an estimated labor force of 19,500 where 16,300 are employed versus 3,200 that are unemployed. Although the Government has a workforce of approximately 5,000 the majority of our local population are employed by the private sector.

The influx of federal funding resources into the territory has also led to more job opportunities on island. Furthermore, the Administration's intent to prioritize human capital is among its major accomplishments throughout 2021 through the following initiatives:

***New ASG Workforce Pay Scale***

Updated career service employees pay scale as per General Memorandum 121-21 went into effect on July 1, 2021.

***The American Samoa Government (ASG) IT Workforce***

The Development Initiative was launched in mid-March and funded by the Community Service Block Grant – CARES Act Program. A total of 124 ASG and private sector employees have enrolled and began training since May 2021.

**Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development - Access to Capital*****Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (EDRLF)***

This Revolving Loan Fund program is funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in partnership between DOC and DBAS.

***Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (EDRLF) - CARES Act***

This is a new revolving loan fund from EDA under its CARES Act allocation for American Samoa for \$1.8 million. The EDRLF-CARES Act program was launched on February 15, 2021 and will provide the American Samoa business community with access to capital for new businesses or business expansion during the Coronavirus pandemic. Applications are being accepted and reviewed for funding at the Territorial Bank of American Samoa.

***State Small Business Credit 2.0***

We hired a State Small Business Credit Initiative Manager to learn the new federal guidance in preparation for the SSBCI 2.0 application for American Samoa to design its local program accordingly. The advancement of economic development is inherent in the strengthening and expansion of the local business sector, increasing export earnings by attracting new industries and foreign capital investment in manufacturing and processing, creating economic surplus by expanding the economic contributions of tourism, fisheries, agriculture, and telecommunications,

as well as increasing the multiplier effect of every federal dollar entering the territory. This division plays a major role in ensuring that these core functions are met through the promotion of trade and investments throughout American Samoa. Four basic programs are carried out to achieve these goals: small business technical assistance program, small business information assistance service program, small business financial assistance program, and the small business awareness and referral service program. The forthcoming SSBCI 2.0 program allocation for American Samoa is \$56 million.

### ***ARPA - Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund for Small Businesses***

Approximately \$10 million has been awarded to the Department of Commerce to implement a small business development and economic recovery program. There are two components for this program: 1) \$5 million for Line of Credit loan product where a COVID-19 impacted business can borrow between \$50K - \$500K; and, 2) \$4 million for a Grant and Loan product for entrepreneurial or business startups.

## **Census 2020**

In October 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau released the 2020 Census population and housing unit counts for American Samoa. As of April 1, 2020, the American Samoa's population was 49,710, representing a decrease of 10.5 percent from the 2010 Census population of 55,519. The housing unit count was 11,807 in 2020, representing an increase of 7.7 percent from the 2010 Census housing unit count of 10,963. (see tables below)

**Housing Unit Counts of American Samoa: 2010 and 2020**

Geographic area	Total Housing Units		Change (2020 less 2010)	
	2010	2020	Number	Percent
<b>American Samoa</b>	<b>10,963</b>	<b>11,807</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>Eastern District</b>	<b>4,490</b>	<b>4,041</b>	<b>-449</b>	<b>-10.0</b>
Itu'u county	936	797	-139	-14.9
Ma'oputasi county	1,999	1,956	-43	-2.2
Sa'ole county	466	319	-147	-31.5
Sua county	595	552	-43	-7.2
Vaifanua county	494	417	-77	-15.6
<b>Manu'a District</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-5.3</b>
Faleaso county	40	53	13	32.5
Fitiuta county	70	65	-5	-7.1
Ofu county	103	81	-22	-21.4
Olosega county	79	49	-30	-38.0
Talu county	84	108	24	28.6
<b>Rose Island</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Swains Island</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-100.0</b>
<b>Western District</b>	<b>6,090</b>	<b>7,410</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Leialataua county	1,038	1,007	-31	-3.0
Leasina county	336	359	23	6.8
Tualatai county	636	740	104	16.4
Tualaiva county	4,080	5,304	1,224	30.0

X: Not applicable.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of American Samoa and 2020 Census of American Samoa.  
DRB Clearance CBDRB-FY22-009

**Population of American Samoa: 2010 and 2020**

Geographic area	Population		Change (2020 less 2010)	
	2010	2020	Number	Percent
<b>American Samoa</b>	<b>55,519</b>	<b>49,710</b>	<b>-5,809</b>	<b>-10.5</b>
<b>Eastern District</b>	<b>23,030</b>	<b>17,059</b>	<b>-5,971</b>	<b>-25.9</b>
Itu'u county	4,676	3,431	-1,245	-26.6
Ma'oputasi county	10,299	8,568	-1,731	-16.8
Sa'ole county	2,187	1,158	-1,029	-47.1
Sua county	3,323	2,415	-908	-27.3
Vaifanua county	2,545	1,487	-1,058	-41.6
<b>Manu'a District</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>-311</b>	<b>-27.2</b>
Faleaso county	162	104	-58	-35.8
Fitiuta county	270	213	-57	-21.1
Ofu county	176	132	-44	-25.0
Olosega county	177	147	-30	-16.9
Talu county	358	236	-122	-34.1
<b>Rose Island</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Swains Island</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-100.0</b>
<b>Western District</b>	<b>31,329</b>	<b>31,819</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Leialataua county	5,103	4,293	-810	-15.9
Leasina county	1,607	1,689	82	5.1
Tualatai county	3,561	3,010	-551	-15.5
Tualaiva county	20,858	22,827	1,969	9.4

X: Not applicable.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census of American Samoa and 2020 Census of American Samoa.  
DRB Clearance CBDRB-FY22-009

This decrease in American Samoa's population count will impact Federal resources that come into our Territory as US Congress uses the Census data to calculate any formula to budget federal

funding allocations for states and territories. The Census Data generates new data through government services that show more than 49,000 people live in American Samoa. Accordingly, ASG will be requesting a recount to include those who were stranded off-island since the border closure in early 2020.

## **BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**

The Department of Commerce oversees a few boards and commissions as mandated by law. The following boards and commissions were recently reconstituted by the Governor of American Samoa with recommendations from the Director of Commerce and staff.

1. Territorial Planning Commission - pending one nominated member for confirmation
2. AS Commerce Commission – reactivated on Feb 2021
3. Alcoholic Beverage Control Board – reconstituted on Feb 2021
4. American Samoa Cosmetology Board – reconstituted on Feb 2021
5. Zoning Board – reconstituted on March 10, 2021

### **WC requirement and business license application process**

This year, the Workmen’s Compensation successfully reintroduced WC compliance requirements within the business license application process with the Department of Commerce.

### **BPO Business Incubator Project**

A in the amount of \$188,800 was approved from DOI OIA to support the BPO Business Incubator Project. Funding will support the expansion of the BPO Incubator project, adding 28 new workstations/seats in Fagatogo. Processing lease agreement for an additional location in Fagatogo to house a 28-seat call center. In the process of ordering equipment, furniture, and conducting necessary tenant improvements.

### **Internet Work Academy Program**

Completed the Internet Work Academy (IWA) program, Phase I. The goal of the IWA is to train our workforce for opportunities with internet related or remote jobs. Phase II is currently being developed via a 12-month contractual agreement which aims to provide opportunities for upskilling throughout the coming year.

## **New Industry Development**

### ***Broadband Industry***

The Department of Commerce was recently designated as a representative for American Samoa on the National Broadband Advisory group for States and Territories with the National Governors Association. This is an effort to stay up to date with the latest on broadband developments. The Biden Administration is injecting billions in broadband initiatives especially throughout the pandemic.

- **American Samoa Territorial Broadband Strategy (ASTBS)**  
ASTBS Plan was officially released/launched on 9/30/2021. DOC recruited and hired a candidate to fill the Territorial Broadband Coordinator position to lead implementation of the ASTBS. DOC also engaged SH3 (contractor who led development of ASTBS) to support initial implementation of ASTBS, securing commitment to support efforts for 12 months via a contract. Contract is in process and should be ready soon. Presented Broadband CORD Office to LTG and Executive Branch with proposed EO and Released the American Samoa Territorial Broadband Strategy to the public. Also completed and submitted an EDA State Planning Grant Application (ARPA) to support broadband and other Planning efforts (\$1 million).
- **Digital Economy: Going Green with Digital Document Management**

Land use permits were converted from paper to electronic files, which has made records easily accessible, especially should there be a shutdown due to a natural disaster or the current pandemic.

- **Digitizing RPM Records**

All RPM records are digitized for easy access.

- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

DOC is the GIS users group lead in the Territory, and have utilized this mapping tool to visualize key data for assessment and analysis.

### ***Fisheries Industry***

The Super Alia project funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is well underway with a contractor that was secured in November to build four new super alia boats. This project was funded by the EDA in November 2020 for \$4.37 million. A local consultant was also secured this year to assist with preparations for training and capacity building workshops for our local fisheries clientele.

### ***Housing Industry***

- **Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)**

American Samoa was awarded about \$18 million in ERAP funds from the US Treasury in early February 2021. ERAP is a new program administered under the Department of Commerce. Our objective is to ensure housing stability for renter households. Rental assistance will be made available for up to one year starting December 2021. The goal of the program is to administer the ERA1 and ERA2 grants awarded by US Treasury and ensure funding is disbursed properly. Tenant and Landlord Workshops – DOC will be organizing separate workshops for all tenants and landlords. These workshops will be a prerequisite for applying for the ERAP. Efforts to roll out the assistance to all eligible participants is currently underway with first payments for eligible recipients to take place before the end of the year.

DOC is pleased to share that a significant step to support access to resources has been accomplished through the Yardi Systems Inc. Application Portal. – DOC has purchased the license to use Yardi’s rent relief portal for application intake and review. The online portal was launched on November 1st, 2021. Applicants (both tenant and landlord) are allowed to log on to the portal to create a profile and submit the required information and documentation for review. They will also be able to track the status of their application through the portal. Once an applicant is approved, payments will be issued by ASG Treasury directly to the landlord and/or ASPA for utility services.

### ***Tourism Industry***

Implementation of two Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs grants: the Aunu’u Ecotourism Project and the Visitor Sites Project. Regular maintenance of the Aunu’u trails system will end on December 31, 2021. All but two visitor site signs have been installed: the Tafuna World War II Traffic Control Tower and the Tia Seu Lupe. Planning is currently working with landowners to coordinate installations. Planning delivered two automated external defibrillators (AED) to support water safety between Auasi and Aunu’u. This compliments the CPR/AED training

completed in 4Q2020. Water safety is critical to tourism in this area. A scope of work for RFP under development to create a Tourism App for American Samoa.

### **ARPA - State Tourism Planning Grant**

Over a million was awarded by the US Economic Development Administration to address the negative impacts of COVID on the tourism industry.

## **Foreign Trade & Investment Opportunities**

### ***Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG)***

On January 28, 2021 American Samoa virtually hosted the 10th Polynesian Leaders Group Meeting. The previous PLG meeting was in August 2019 in Tuvalu. American Samoa took up the Chairmanship position and the responsibility to host the 10th Polynesian Leaders Group in early 2020. The outbreak of measles in late 2019, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, required the closure of borders and restrictions on travels. Postponement of the PLG ensured everyone's safety. Agenda topics included Climate Change and Oceans, Fisheries and Agriculture, and Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT), and other matters



introduced by the members. All member nations joined, as well as several observers. The PLG meeting was a great opportunity to address social and economic issues with other Polynesia leaders. Strengthening partnerships with our neighboring island nations is a great feat for all administrations.

### ***SelectUSA 2021 Virtual Summit***

American Samoa and other US Territories were featured in a panel for the very first time at the US Department of Commerce Trade Office program known as the SelectUSA Investment Summit. It was a virtual summit where thousands of investors from across the globe participated to scope the US market for potential business and foreign direct investments in the US. DOC and the Visitors Bureau partnered to create a promotional video to share on American Samoa's virtual exhibit booth. The department plans to make this investment summit opportunity one of its annual programs under the ITI subdivision.

### ***DOC Official Website Upgrade***

DOC has upgraded its official website with the goal to utilize it as a tool to attract investors to American Samoa, and also an engaging portal for the general public to apply for all services available through the Department of Commerce. Ideally, the use of its new website is an effort to promote transparency and accountability through virtual operation. So far, the website has also given an opportunity for stranded business owners that are currently off-island to apply for a business license or a renewal.



## **Urban Planning & Development**

***The Tramway Memorial Park*** grant project is in the initiation phase. Project fund is worth \$61,500 which will fund small improvements to the historic tramway site. This project is funded by the US Department of Agriculture - Rural Development agency.

### ***Westside Multipurpose Playground***

After being on hold for more than a year, the construction of a multipurpose playground to serve the west side community is now underway. The playground is located in the village of Leone, behind the Catholic church. This project is a partnership between ASG, and Leone village.

### ***Vaitogi Turtle & Shark Lookout***

For a project that has been delayed due to obstacles, this project is now progressing. The land use permit is in progress with plans to begin the procurement process soon.

### ***Pago Pago International Airport Food Court Area***

The paperwork for the food court area was approved and a contract was issued and routed by the Port Administration. A contractor was fully executed on August 23, 2021. A notice to proceed (NTP) letter was issued. Completion period for the design of the Tafuna International Airport Food Court Area will be for 90 days from August 30 to November 28. 25% of the SOW was completed in this quarter.

### ***Innovation & Technology Park Development***

Plans are underway to work with an architectural firm to develop the masterplan for the Tafuna Industrial Park area for further development to include an Innovation and Technology Park campus, the new hospital, the new medical plaza and an upgraded picnic and therapeutic park in the area. This initiative also includes collaborative work with other agencies to develop the Lion's Park, Veterans Stadium (and surrounding areas), and Connect Centers (community hubs) in the Western and Eastern districts.

### ***Sports Complex Development***

Plans are also underway to work with an architectural firm to develop a masterplan for the area around the stadium to include an indoor multipurpose sports facility/arena and simply turning the area into a Sports Park.

### ***Downtown Revitalization Development Master Plan***

This is part of our tourism development plan and an opportunity to upgrade the downtown area. Plans are underway to also work with an architectural firm to prepare a masterplan for the downtown area.

### ***Medical Plaza***

Funding has been approved by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to build a new Medical Plaza to house healthcare businesses, and an opportunity to create more jobs and provide more access to private healthcare services during the global pandemic.

## Real Property Management

### *Tafuna Industrial Park (TIP)*

#### **TIP Access Roads**

Through the Public Works and Economic Development Facilities Program, EDA provides catalytic investments to help distressed communities build, design, or engineer critical infrastructure and facilities that will help implement regional development strategies and advance bottom-up economic development goals to promote regional prosperity. This program also provides resources to meet the construction and/or infrastructure design needs of communities enabling them to be economically competitive.

### *Government Land Inventory*

#### **Arrears Collection**

A long overdue collaboration effort with the Treasury Department has been established within the first 100 days of the current Administration, which has and continues to improve our collection efforts. Some tenants have made the effort to initiate a payment plan on their arrears and have made payments already. As of March 2021, current arrears on Tafuna Industrial Park (TIP) properties were approximately \$491,957.80.

#### **Abatement Policy Rescinded**

The Administration has rescinded the \$0.25/sq ft lease rate policy and abatement that was initiated in 2020. This policy limited ASG's ability to collect more revenue.

## Low-Income Benefits

### **CSBG FY2021 Grant Award**

CSBG received its full allocation for FY2021 on March 2nd, 2021. The grant award of \$997,792 was obligated by October 1, 2021 and will expire on September 30, 2022.

### **Economic Impact of the DHSS Client Benefits and Payments**

The Department of Human and Social Services infused into the local economy close to \$30 million in monthly client benefits and payments which stimulated economic growth and generated additional monies in economic activities. This does not include administrative and operational costs for all DHSS programs and services.

- ***ASNAP Division – A total of \$17,060,538 was issued from January to December 2021 as follows:***
  - ASNAP issued \$7,402,729 benefits from January to December 2021 to 4,290 recipients.
  - ASNAP Incentive to Stimulate Local Food Production - 20% of benefits are in “local” food coupons only for the purchase of locally fished, grown, and produced food items. This helps our local farmers, fishermen, bakeries and other food producers. It also incentivizes new local food production. The remaining 80% of ASNAP benefits are in “regular” food coupons for the purchase of imported and local food items.

- COVID NAP Benefits - Issued \$830,865 in COVID NAP benefits to a monthly average of 494 recipients. COVID NAP ended September 30, 2021.
- COVID SNAP Benefits - Issued \$2,160,875 in COVID SNAP benefits to a monthly average of 4,402 recipients. COVID SNAP ended September 30, 2021.
- P-EBT Benefits - Issued \$6,666,069 in P-EBT benefits to 12,888 children from 5,892 households as of December 30, 2021. P-EBT ended on December 30, 2021.
- ***ASWIC Division – Redeemed \$4,224,290 in benefits by January to December 2021.***
  - ASWIC Regular Benefits - Redeemed an average of \$393,344 in monthly EBT benefits including CVV/B for fruits and vegetables for an average of 744 women, 657 infants and 3,031 children (totaling 4,432).
- ***Child Care Division –A total of \$7,107,716 was issued from January to December 2021 as follows:***
  - Payments to Child Care Centers -**\$5,939,728**
  - Payments to Family Child Care Providers - **\$51,387**
  - Payments to In-Home Child Care Providers - **\$819,001**
  - Teacher Stipend Payments - **\$297,600**
- ***Children and Family Services Division***
  - Rental Assistance Payments from January to December 2021- **\$32,000**

### **ON-GOING INFRASTRUCTURE CDBG-CV (COVID-19)**

CDBG has outlined projects to use COVID-19 funds awarded to ASG. DOC is working in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety to purchase Fire Trucks to service both residents of Tutuila and Manu’a. This is a \$1.32million award to fund the new fire trucks and part of the medical plaza.

## **Development Bank of American Samoa**

The Development Bank of American Samoa’s (DBAS) continues to sustain federal and local loan programs as an instrument to channel financial assistance to our local community. The following is an overview and result of the Development Bank’s efforts and accomplishments at the institutional level.

### **Loans Department Major Accomplishments (October 2020-September 2021)**

From the years 2020 to 2021, the Development Bank of American Samoa (DBAS) funded a combined total of thirty-six (36) home renovations and new home construction loans through its Direct Mortgage Loan Program totaling \$922,500.00. Through the federally funded HUD HOME program 13 new homes were approved, built, completed and in progress from 2020 to 2021 totaling \$725,843.00.

Another federally funded loan program that DBAS has partnered up with is the VA Native American Direct Loan (NADL) for the Veterans returning home to build their homes in American Samoa. This program approved 5 loans over the past year with a loan volume of \$797,792.00.

The first virtual Veterans Affairs Loan Guaranty Workshop was conducted at the Veterans Affairs Office at Tafuna Industrial Park. More than sixty veterans were in attendance voicing concerns and questions about the VA Native American Direct loan program.

Through the federally funded Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (EDRLF) program 5 new start-ups and existing businesses were productively funded a combined total of \$410,000.00. This specific program created 572 jobs in the past seven years. Last year it was recorded that 404 jobs remain from the 572 jobs created by EDRLF funding. Some of the job loss was due to COVID-19.

### **Small business developments from FY 2020-FY 2021**

DBAS has funded the following programs:

- 1 business loans through Community Service Block Grant Program totaling \$3,500
- 6 small business through the direct micro loan \$12,000
- 4 start-up businesses through the direct commercial loan program in total amount of \$45,000
- 48 Special Project Commercial Loans (Small Business loans) for Farmers a total of \$112,800.00
- 66 Special Project Commercial Loans (Small Business loans) for Fishers a total of \$133,000

On January 2021, DBAS received approval from the federal Small Business Association (SBA) to become an SBA lender for the first time. March 2021, DBAS launch Special Project Commercial Loans for farmers, and April 2021, Special Project Commercial Loans for fishermen was launched. These loans helped promote and support small businesses especially during the pandemic. Special Project Commercial loans for farmers and fishermen succeeded with the approval of a combined total of 104 loans, with a volume of \$245,800.00.

### **Finance Department Major Accomplishments (October 2020-October 2021)**

The Finance Department continues to follow the Policies and Standard Operating Procedures, with the guidelines as required through Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), and Uniform Guidance (UG). DBAS managed to maintain its goal of having a clean audit every year. An effect due to COVID audit was conducted virtually from November 2020 to September 2021. The final audit opinions for financial statements were present fairly in all material respects for FY2019. DBAS is now anticipating an audit for FY2020 to commence soon.

In 2016 Development Bank of American Samoa loaned two million dollars (\$2,000,000.00) from the American Samoa Government Employee Retirement Fund (ASGERF) to increase funding for home and business development. This funding allowed DBAS to assist 180 homeowners to

improve their dwellings, and 12 businesses to sustain their operations. As of October 2021, DBAS with the approval from the Board of Directors paid off the ASGERF loan entirely in the amount of \$2,505,707.00

On June 16, 2021, DBAS was awarded \$255,811.00 under the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Grant by the Department of Interior for its Step into Virtual Banking Project. Living in a technological accelerated era demands for updated software and hardware computer systems for any institution to operate efficiently. Adapting to the changes of modern way of living have led DBAS to search for avenues and strategies to make virtual banking a reality and to withstand any unforeseen circumstances in the future. The TAP grant will assist in upgrading DBAS computers, network infrastructure, and procuring related equipment.

### **American Samoa Visitors Bureau**

Fiscal Year 2021 was riddled with challenges for the American Samoa Visitors Bureau (ASVB), given the continued impact of COVID-19. American Samoa joined countries throughout the world in re-evaluating how to proceed in promoting their countries as visiting destinations. While the industry has changed from what the ASVB has experienced in the past, COVID has also forced the Visitor's Bureau to focus on local product development for our residents and in preparation for future travelers/visitors.

The ASVB accomplishments for FY 2021 are as follows:

- Collaboration with private sector 'Visit Amerika Samoa Association' (VASA) on completing new village signs. These signs will be installed in January 2022.
- Creating the new marketing campaign for local product development and awareness, "Explore, Experience and Enjoy" (Triple E)
- Filmed over 30 Fale Lalaga talk shows, with host Poe Mageo and various businesses
- Increased social media viewership by 48.4% (Facebook), 621.5% (Instagram) and 76% (YouTube)
- Began 'Save the Music', 'Plant Beauty and Culture', 'Let's Learn Fishing' and 'Exploring our Ocean' programs
- Pilot program with DOE and seniors on village brochures
- Completed Mural in the arrival area of airport
- Conducted coastal assessment survey and tour of Tutuila and Aunu'u, Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary and created a promotional video for a marketing campaign
- Visited Manu'a to determine future development, and also visited Rose Atoll
- Continue networking with the South Pacific Tourism Organization on regional tourism development efforts.

The American Samoa Visitors Bureau continues to promote and support the expansion and development of our local product, while marketing these to our residents. They have aggressively worked at keeping a balance between local development and marketing/promotional efforts with our off-island markets.

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# STATE OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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From healthcare, transportation, information communication and technology, the Lemanu-Talauega Administration recognizes the need to rebuild and strengthen our critical infrastructure for a sustainable economic future. The Administration has prioritized the utilization of information and communication technology as a critical infrastructure and form of economic development for the Territory. The Administration has carried out numerous public works improvement projects from road development, clinics to airport facilities and is looking to develop infrastructure catered around innovation and technology.

## **The Department of Public Works**

The Department of Public Works (DPW) continues to manage the infrastructure of American Samoa by completing ongoing projects and addressing the immediate needs of the general public streamlined by the Governor's Office. DPW is working on upgrading existing government structures as well as developing new projects with innovative ideas that will project the new face of the government with modern infrastructure and developments within the coming years.

A few major building projects include the ongoing Fono Building Project and the High Court Building in the village of Fagatogo. Majority of the building projects managed by DPW are school buildings and gymnasiums. Major road projects include the Fonoti / Leapaga Road Project, and the Malaeloa Village Road Project, the Afono and Vatia Village Road Projects and island wide ongoing road maintenance repairs supervised by DPW, but were later outsourced due to lack of resources and equipment.

The Administration has invested greatly into education infrastructure to build and upgrade school facilities to support student learning and achievement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With the injection of millions of dollars in CARES Act funding (ESF & ARPA) for the Department of Education, the Office of Procurement and the Department of Education have established a Maintenance Committee to plan and implement the numerous maintenance and infrastructure projects. This committee meets regularly every 3 to 4 weeks to check in and monitor the status of outstanding PR's and scopes of work, projects out for bid, and Purchase Order/Contract statuses.

A committee was also established with staff of the Department of Public Works, Governor's Office Special Programs and the Office of Procurement to review and expedite the various projects directed by the Governor's Office. This committee meets frequently and is in constant contact to ensure that the projects are on track and moving expeditiously through the proper channels and processes. These projects range from the various CIP-funded school building projects, road rehabilitation repatriation/quarantine activities, island-wide landscaping projects, etc.

In the first year of the Administration, the Department of Public Works successfully completed many federally and locally funded road projects and began work on a significant number of others. While DPW has no control over shipping delays and shortage of materials, they are making steady progress daily on the reconditioning and repair of our roads. For every infrastructure project in progress, there is another one out for bid and more being designed.

**ROAD PROJECTS**

2021 COMPLETED ROAD PROJECTS		ON-GOING ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS	
	<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	1	Route 013 Road Reconstruction - Malaeloa Village
1	Matafao Elementary School Parking lot	2	Route 018 New Road Construction
2	Rehabilitation, Restoration and Repair (3R) Afono	3	Route 020 Ofu-Olosega Bridge Rail Repair
3	McDonald's Resurfacing	4	Route 001 Drainage Improvement in Litani Area, Nu'uuli
4	Amouli Dispensary Access Road & Parking	5	Access Road Governor's Mansion
<b>ROAD PROJECTS PENDING DESIGN</b>		6	Route 006 Sailele Drainage Improvement
1	Fagaimea Flood Mitigation Project	7	Route 006 Vatia Road Maintenance
2	Malaeimi road (School vicinity)	8	Route 012 Poloa - Fagamalo village road
3	Golf Course loop road	9	Vaitogi Loop Road
4	Island-wide Safety Improvement (Tutuila)	10	Mapusaga Fou Access Road
5	Route 016 Inouye Industrial Road (Back road to TBAS)	<b>DESIGN COMPLETE-PENDING PROCUREMENT PROCESS</b>	
6	Route 002 Aoloau Village Road Reconstruction	1	Route 003 - Route 004 Road Reconstruction (Taputimu)
7	Route 009 Amanave to Poloa Village Road Reconstruction	2	Amouli Dispensary Access Road
8	Route 102 Poloa - ER	3	Construction of Sidewalk (Leloaloe)
9	Boat Ramp	4	Petesa-Uta Access Road
10	Guardrail System at Tramway	5	Fatu-O-Aiga Access Road(s) [Jason David St.; Pio Cardinal St.; Fatu-O-Aiga St.]
11	Route 001 Laufou Bus Pull-out	6	Ottoville Acces Road (Adjacent Tumu's Apt.)
12	Route 001 Suigaula Bus Pull-out Improvement	7	Leone Village Access Road (Adjacent Katina Church)
		8	Debris Removal - Various Locations
		9	Masausi Drainage Improvement

**2021 Completed Road Projects**



### Ongoing Road Projects



## EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

2021 COMPLETED PROJECTS - Education	
	PROJECT TITLE
1	Coleman ES Gymnasium
2	Leone HS Cafeteria Improvements

ON GOING PROJECTS - Education	
	PROJECT TITLE
1	Manulele ES Gymnasium
2	Lupelele ES Gymnasium
3	Leone Midkiff ES Gymnasium
4	Manu'a Consolidated Elementary New School building
5	Alataua II Two-story classroom building
6	Samoana HS Two-story classroom and Administration Office
7	Pavaiai ES Two-story classroom building
8	Fagaitua HS Two-story classroom building
9	ASCC New Two-Story Remote Learning and Cafeteria
10	A.P Lutali Elementary Improved Classrooms & Wash Stations
11	First Community Learning Center
12	Early Childhood Education (ECE) building
13	Youth Counseling Center
14	OPM & DOE Sanitation Supplies Facility
15	Ta'u Manu'a School Lunch Program Pre-fab Metal building

2021 AWARDED PROJECTS	
	PROJECT TITLE
1	Coleman Elementary Kitchen/Cafeteria Improvements
2	Coleman Elementary Admin & Classroom Improvements
3	Fagaitua High School Classrooms Improvements
4	Lauli'i Elementary Improved Classrooms and wash stations
5	Lupelele Elementary Improved Classrooms, Kitchen & Cafeteria
6	Lupelele Elementary Improved Classrooms and Restrooms
7	Pavaiai Elem Improved Kitchen/ Cafeteria, SPED Unit & classrooms

DESIGN COMPLETE - PROCUREMENT PROCESS	
1	Leone Midkiff #2 Improved Classrooms
2	Leone Midkiff #3 Improved Classrooms
3	Vatia Mauga-o-Alava Improved Classrooms & Kitchen/Cafeteria
4	Aoa Olomoana Classrooms, Kitchen/Cafeteria Improvements
5	Fagalii Elementary School Multipurpose Facility
6	Laulii Elementary School Kitchen/Cafeteria Improvements
7	Little League Baseball Field

PROJECTS PENDING DESIGNS/SPECS	
1	Leone Midkiff #1 Expansion Kitchen/Cafeteria & Classrooms
2	Tafuna High School Classroom Improvements
3	Department of Education Main Office
4	Fagasa Leatele ES Multipurpose Building
5	Alofau Elementary School Walkway; Multipurpose
6	Aoa Elementary School Multipurpose

### 2021 Completed Education Infrastructure Projects



Coleman Elementary Gym



Leone HS Cafeteria

Ongoing Education Infrastructure Projects



Manulele Gymnasium



Lupelele Gymnasium



Leone Midkiff Gymnasium



Alataua II New Building



Samoana New Building



Pavaiai New Building



Fagaitua HS New Building



ASCC Remote Learning & Cafeteria



DOE Central Erate



First Community Learning Center

### Other Infrastructure Projects

ON GOING PROJECTS - Others	
	PROJECT TITLE
1	Country Club Renovation Project
2	DOH Amouli Dispensary
3	Renovations for DOH Office at Seaport
4	West Side Multipurpose Playground (Leone)
5	Tafuna Correctional Facility-Maximum Security Isolation building
6	Malaloa Wharf Extension Project
7	Fono Project
8	Court House 2-Story Office Building for the Judicial Branch

2021 AWARDED PROJECTS	
1	DMWR Building Improvements

PROJECTS PENDING DESIGNS/SPECS	
1	Customs K9 Kennel Repair/Renovation
2	KVZK TV Office Repair and Renovation



Country Club Renovations



West Side Multipurpose Playground (Leone)



Fono Project



Court House 2-story Building

## Manu'a Development

For years, the residents of Manu'a have been underserved with the lack of public facilities and other infrastructural mechanisms, unreliable and infrequent surface and air transportation systems, healthcare services, educational services, business services and many other challenges. The Lemanu-Talauega Administration remains committed to serving the people of Manu'a by improving government services and investing in critical infrastructure projects. These projects are necessary and crucial to improving access to government services and the quality of life for our Manu'a residents. Government presence on the Manu'a Islands has continued to expand which is moving us closer to our goal of ensuring all government services are available on Manu'a. The following is a list of projects, developments and accomplishments of the Administration in Manu'a during the year 2021:

### Inter-Island Ferry Service

The Administration has continued to invest in the expansion of and building the efficiency of Manu'a's air and surface transportation infrastructure. This past year saw an increase in reliable and frequent surface travel between Pago Pago and Manu'a via the MV Manu'atele. The MV Manu'atele has increased its service, maintaining regularly scheduled trips to the Manu'a Islands. Table below shows January-December 2021 statistics of vessel and aircraft movements between Tutuila and Manu'a.

DEPARTMENT OF PORT ADMINISTRATION						
STATISTICS REPORT						
2021 (Trips to Manua)						
#'s	Statistics	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	Total Trip
		Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	
<b>1</b>	<b>Seaport (Vessels)</b>					
	Manuatele	10	14	21	13	58
	Segaula	-	25	72	-	97
	MV Pago Pago	-	15	15	23	53
	Fotu o Samoa	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2</b>	<b>Airport (Flights)</b>					
	Fifuta	88	124	107	144	463
	Ofu	58	16	-	-	74
	<b>Overall total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>745</b>

### Development Bank Service to the Manu'a Islands

A recent development has been providing the same services available in Tutuila islands to the Manu'a islands. The collaboration with the Governor's Office Manu'a staff helped DBAS to assess and assist with the needs of the Manu'a residents. DBAS visits to the Manu'a islands alleviate travel expenses for the Manu'a residents to Tutuila to process and receive loan disbursements. A combined total of 79 Special Project Commercial Loans for fishermen and farmers were issued to the residents of Manu'a, totaling \$152,000 DBAS was able to help Manu'a homeowners by approving 25 Direct Repair loans, booked and disbursed totaling \$305,911.

### Manu'a ASTCA Connection

With the partnership of Ericsson North America, ASTCA has successfully restored the vital Manu'a connection to Tutuila with an 84-mile microwave backhaul link. The link is now providing a steady 1Gbps backhaul most with 600Mbps at four 9's availability. One of the goals is to seek a viable alternative source for connectivity.

### Sunrise Park: Mutietele

Plans are underway for the development of Sunrise Park: Mutietele. This is expected to be a major tourist sightseeing attraction in Fitiuta, Manu'a.

## Ongoing Manu'a Projects



## Department of Port Authority

The Department of Port Authority (DPA) is tasked with managing six (6) seaports and three (3) airports throughout the Territory. Over the past year, DPA has been working diligently to ensure that border facilities, and the services provided can continue to serve the community in a safe and healthy environment - especially given the current global COVID -19 pandemic restrictions. As such, DPA continues to enhance its support of the American Samoa Government by modifying its operations, services and facility set-up to meet the transportation demands to ensure the timely movement and processing of ships and aircrafts given the pandemic. DPA looks forward to continuing its mission in providing the necessary services and facilities to ensure the transportation of goods, materials and people are conducted in a safe, effective and efficient manner. As a means to further enhance capital improvements, DPA has been successful with the submissions of several applications for federal funding, namely:

### U.S Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (USDOT MARAD)

Project	Project Site	Priority	Non-Federal Funding <sup>1</sup>	Federal Funding <sup>2</sup>	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
Container Yard – Flood Lighting	Pago Pago	1	\$17,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$102,000.00
Cargo Movement Equipment - Forklifts	All Ports – Ferry System	2	\$18,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$108,000.00
Dock Fendering	<i>All ports combined</i>	3	\$112,000.00	\$448,000.00	\$560,000.00
	<i>Aunu'u</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>\$5,240.00</i>	<i>\$20,960.00</i>	<i>\$26,200.00</i>
	<i>Auasi</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>\$7,830.00</i>	<i>\$31,320.00</i>	<i>\$39,150.00</i>
	<i>Ofu</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>\$10,050.00</i>	<i>\$40,200.00</i>	<i>\$50,250.00</i>
	<i>Tau</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>\$6,000.00</i>	<i>\$24,000.00</i>	<i>\$30,000.00</i>
	<i>Faleasao</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>\$7,830.00</i>	<i>\$31,320.00</i>	<i>\$39,150.00</i>
	<i>Pago Pago</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>\$75,050.00</i>	<i>\$300,200.00</i>	<i>\$375,250.00</i>
Container Yard - Resurfacing	Pago Pago	4	\$80,000.00	\$320,000.00	\$400,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$227,000.00</b>	<b>\$943,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,170,000.00</b>

1. American Samoa Government local match (20%)<sup>2</sup> Marine Highway Grant Funding (80%)

### American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Efforts are underway to further secure ARPA funding for the follow infrastructure improvements with the goal of combating the negative effects of the COVID19 pandemic:

Seaport: \$20M- New Seaport Building, Port Infrastructure, Vessels

Airport: \$15 M- Airport Terminal Renovations

### Hazard Mitigation Funding

DPA has been able to secure the opportunity to submit the following projects for consideration under the HAZMIT program with FEMA:

Runway Shoreline Protection (Rank #2)	\$5M
Aunu'u Wharf Reconstruction (Rank #3)	\$2.5M
Faleasao Wharf Structure (Rank #5)	\$25M
Ofu Airport Revetment (Rank #7)	\$2.5M

**DOI OIA with CIP Funding**

Port Container Tracking System	\$292,000
Port Electronic Ticketing System	\$200,000

**Projects**

<b><u>PAGO PAGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</u></b>		
a. Airline Offices Renovation	\$1M	
b. Arrival Area Upgrade	\$1.1M	(100% in 10/21)
c. DOI funded ARFF Academy – Class #1 Badging Ceremony (slated for 12/21)		
d. Free Wireless Internet Services in Departure Lounge & Arrival Terminal in support of the COVID -19 Talofa Pass System		
e. Successful Repatriation airport and COVID-19 Drive Thru Operations at the Airport		
f. FAA funded Apron Rehabilitation	\$30M	60% complete
g. DOI funded Online Recurrent Training		Set up in progress
<b><u>MANU'A AIRPORTS</u></b>		
a. Fitiuta AP New ARFF Truck	\$500K	FAA funded
b. Fitiuta AP New Passenger Facility (Estimated completion 12/21)	\$400K	Special Programs funded
c. Fitiuta AP Terminal Bldg. Renovation	\$12K	Cares Act funded
d. Ofu AP New ARFF Truck	\$500K	FAA funded
e. Ofu Airport Runway Reconstruction (completion 12/21)	\$8M	FAA funded (Estimated)
f. FAA funded Airfield Lighting Upgrade	\$1.7M	(Construction 11/21)
g. Cares Act funded Z08 Terminal Building Renovation		\$5K
<b><u>PORT OF PAGO PAGO</u></b>		
a. Sailele & Iseula tug boats dry dock repairs \$500K		
b. First Annual Full-Scale Exercise coordinated by Port Security Division		
c. USCG Seaman Ordinary Certification Training conducted by Water Transp. Division		
d. Port Advanced Security Surveillance System	\$138K	DOI Funded
e. Port Container Tracking System	\$292K	DOI Funded
f. Port Electronic Ticketing System	\$200K	DOI Funded

**American Samoa Shipyard Authority**

The government owned shipyard in Satala as overseen by the American Samoa Shipyard Authority has resolved major hurdles that existed at the start of this Administration. Through a February 8th executive order, specific provisions of the 2011 executive order were amended to include changes to the composition of the Shipyard Authority's board of directors and appointment of its executive director.

For years, the shipyard was closed and unable to provide the much-needed overhaul and repairing services to ocean vessels due to its deteriorating state. It was forecasted that it would take at least 12 - 14 months before any drydocking work could begin. This has been accomplished in 9 months. The Shipyard's objective is to become a 2-cradle shipyard with all the equipment necessary to

attempt any other challenge in the boat repair business using the maximum capabilities of a 3000-ton capacity shipyard. The shipyard has also acquired a full line of equipment and tools and has paused drydocking operations this past December in an effort to repair the second cradle, so that 2 vessels could drydock at the same time. This will allow the shipyard to double their production and repair capabilities therefore doubling revenue. This past year alone, the shipyard has serviced eight boats and has collected about \$1 million.

Apart from the economical and revival success, the shipyard has been able to learn how to confront adversity, and has created an incredible force of efficient workers. The majority of the shipyard's employees have been cross-trained; each member has been taught and trained to be more versatile and be able to perform in 3 to 4 different work positions. The shipyard has also implemented the Warren Initiative with the purpose of recruitment and the implementation of a training program for a new generation of shipyard workers. To date, 6 people have performed extremely well under this program.



## Office of Public Information

Since its establishment in 1964, KVZK has served as a propagating instrument for American Samoa. This past year, the Office of Public Information (OPI) has made great strides in the dissemination of information locally, in neighboring South Pacific islands, and the whole world. This year, KVZK prioritized the update of standards and systems of local production, the expansion of programming to reach broader audiences, and the upgrade of existing analog to the digital library system. Below are OPI's year 2021 most notable achievements:

### Social Media Outreach

Social media has been the leading method of connecting to global audiences; with the on-going pandemic requiring social distancing and/or community lockdowns, the usage and dependability on social media skyrocketed over the past two years. During 2021, KVZK utilized social media platforms expanding to internet audiences through live streaming and uploads of prerecorded content or programs. Since the initial upload on KVZK Facebook page, and the recent addition of our YouTube Channel, statistics presents about six hundred thousand (600,000) virtual reach and twenty-seven thousand (27,000) following on Facebook.



### KVZK Public Media Library Digitization

On April 30, 2021, the Office of Public Information (OPI) was awarded \$498,895 of the Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). In partnership with the American Archive of Public Broadcasting (AAPB) WGBH Educational Foundation and the Library of Congress (LOC), this project aims to preserve and conserve over 11,600 KVZK locally produced programs since its birth in 1963.

Converting from archaic storage devices, such as 2-inch, 1-inch, three-quarter inch tapes, and other analog based type formats to digital formats, OPI is able to safeguard many historical, cultural, and traditional knowledge and content of American Samoa. This project is projected to last three years. The library digitization project is a massive technological step for American Samoa as it will allow our past pictures and videos to be preserved, then shared for future generations. In learning from our cultural history, with the assistance of project partners such as The Jean. P. Haydon Museum, Feleti Barstow Library, and Samoan Studies Institute of American Samoa Community College, various opportunities are possible for growth and expansion politically and economically.

### **KVZK TV DIGITAL Migration**

During the first quarter of FY2021, OPI contracted the services of the Melanesia Media Group (MMG), a company based in New Zealand, to upgrade KVZK's broadcast system from analogue to digital format. The new system would place KVZK TV on par with current public broadcasting agencies modernizing equipment and workflow, which will provide high quality definition to all viewers. The Project cost is three hundred fifty-three five hundred fifteen dollars (\$353,515.00). To date, about seventy-five percent (75%) of the project is completed and is projected to be completed by January 2022. This includes configuration of old DVD player and DV-cam, installation of a new master control with new equipment, bidirectional SDI/HDMI switch, and playout/ingest servers. In completion of this project, American Samoa's only public broadcasting station will operate on modernized technology, trained employees, and update workflows. As a result, this will eliminate the grainy pixelated picture and playout high-definition picture for local and off island viewers to enjoy and benefit in understanding and better cultivate the information from each locally produced program.

## **American Samoa Telecommunications Authority**

As a result of the American Samoa Government's \$30 million-dollar investment into the new Hawaiki submarine fiber optic cable, the Territory of American Samoa now has significantly more bandwidth than most small island developing states in the region. Hawaiki Cable has reported capturing 80% of the local Broadband Market. It has dramatically increased connectivity and commercial opportunities and has led to the creation of call centers utilizing dynamic Voice Over IP services that have optimized call quality, simplicity, and value.

Additionally, the fiber-to-the-premises project, more commonly known as the BLAST project, ensures that end users have state-of-the-art access to this new bandwidth, opening opportunities for developments across many industries and sectors. This new connectivity is well positioned to support the much-needed diversification of our economy.

The American Samoa Telecommunications Authority (ASTCA) has worked towards leveraging the power of the people by strengthening capabilities and improving their performance. Although it has been a year of incremental change and a year of challenges, ASTCA, under the lead of its new CEO, has overcome great obstacles. On a macro level, the accomplishments of ASTCA during FY2021 have been to remove the technology and business constraints that have impaired our

ability to be a genuine user-focused and sales-driven organization. This ranges from broadening the LTE network for on boarding devices to continuous employee training and development. Management’s goal has been to broaden the perspective of our employees and make them balance sheet aware of their functional efficiencies and role as servants to the community. On a micro level, ASTCA has continued to make progressive improvements across the organization that have yielded results in the functional areas of Retail & Distribution, Engineering, Human Resource Development, Sales and Marketing, to Customer Service and Finance.

### **Launching of Roaming for Prepaid Mobile Subscribers**

In October 2021, ASTCA launched mobile roaming services in the USA and all its Territories. ASTCA customers now have the convenience of being able to travel using their ASTCA SIM card without having to sign up or purchase a new SIM card from another carrier when traveling to Hawaii or the Mainland. Traditionally available only for businesses or postpaid accounts, ASTCA has made roaming available to everyone, including eTopup prepaid mobile subscribers.



### **American Samoa Power Authority**

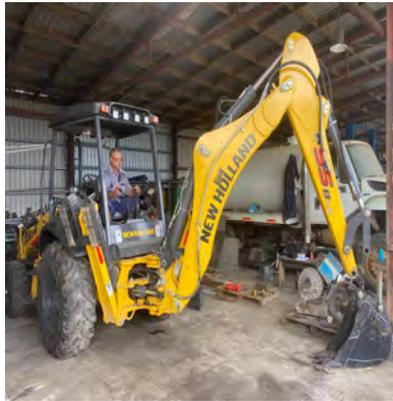
The American Samoa Power Authority Operating Income exceeded Operating Expenses in FY2021, for the third year in a row. Total operating revenue was \$63,788,311 versus \$56,645,434 in operating expenses; before depreciation expense.

The cost of fuel to generate electricity is beyond ASPA's control. The recent spike in fuel costs, noticeable at the gas stations as well, has increased the cost of the December 2021 kWh rate, since the most recent low in January 2021 by 27%. ASPA continues to explore renewable energy options for American Samoa with Wind Turbine technology as well as Solar Photovoltaic Panels (PV). These two Renewable Energy resources are the only proven technology that will fit within our island's landscape with the limited flowing water for Hydro. Until then, we are at the mercy of global fuel market prices and the many challenges faced with shipping & higher costs of materials around the world.

ASPA completed fourteen (14) Water and Sewer Projects in 2021, totaling \$14,115,276. Six of the fourteen projects were water wells and well connection projects. Four main water line replacement projects and two water tank projects were also completed in 2021. Eight thousand water meters were replaced and one sewer project was also completed.

ASPA purchased seven new pieces of heavy equipment in 2021 for its Solid Waste Division. This included two Front-end-loader garbage trucks, two Rover bin trucks, two 24-ton excavators, and one Bomag landfill compactor. Total equipment cost - \$2.2 million.

Three Backhoe Loaders and one knuckle boom crane truck were also purchased for the Water division. Total cost - \$727,000.



Due to the shortage of skilled tradesmen and technicians on island, ASPA hired thirty-five (35) apprentices and trainees in 2021 as follows:

- Apprentices - 10
- Trainee Lineman - 10
- Trainee Water Operators - 5
- Trainee WW Operators - 5
- Trainee Construction Inspectors - 5



The Apprentices will study Electrical Engineering (8) and Land Surveying (2) at the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in New Zealand. Upon completion of their studies, the apprentices will undergo 3 years of practical training at ASPA to gain their N.Z. Certificate of Engineering.

**WATER DIVISION**

Tramway Tank Replacement Phase 2:

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$1,249,365      Contractor: Tony’s Construction

Benefits: This project will improve the pressure and supply of water to the high elevation customers in the upper Utulei, Fagatogo, and Gataivai area.

New Wells (Drilling and Exploration):

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: Well 18, 19, and 20 drilling complete

Project cost: \$1,363,540      Contractor: ASPA

Benefits: The new wells will improve the water supply, pressure, and distribution in the Central Water System. The increase in water supply will also enable ASPA to shut down GUDI wells and allow for the lifting of the Boil Water Notice in the Central Water System.

Vaitogi AC Pipe Replacement:

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$662,316      Contractor: CTC Construction

Benefits: The replacement of these old AC and PE pipes lowers the NRW (water loss) in the Vaitogi area, which in turn reduces the operational cost to ASPA.

Manu'a Sanitary Survey Project:

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$1,000,000      Contractor: Happy Trucking

Benefits: This project addressed significant deficiencies which were completed to stay in compliance with requirements by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The project also protects Manua's limited water resources.

Water Meter Replacement Project

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$2,000,000      Contractor: ASPA

Benefits: The new meters are more accurate and provide real-time data at one-hour intervals which provides for more accurate billing. Meter accuracy is also key to determining water losses in different parts of the water system.

Pavaiai to Futiga ACP Replacement Project

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$1,250,911      Contractor: CTC

Benefits: This project improves water pressure and distribution in the Central District Water System and significantly reduces the NRW within this zone.

Well #6 Mesepa Connection Project

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$1,071,800      Contractor: Happy Trucking

Benefits: This project improves the system water pressure in the area of Mesepa & Faleniu to ASCC compound.

New Well #15 Water System Connection Project

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$1,300,000      Contractor: Happy Trucking

Benefits: This new well improves water pressure and distribution in the Eastern District Water System. The new well increases the water supply and enables ASPA to shut down GUDI wells and allow for the lifting of the Boil Water Notice (BWN) in the Eastern District Water System.

Pavaiai 8"Ø ACP Replacement Project (NMTC Funded)

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$1,919,300      Contractor: RM Construction

Benefits: The project significantly reduces water loss and operating costs in the Pavaiai water system.

New Well #25 Connection Project (Ili'ili)

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$250,000      Contractor: ASPA

Benefits: The new well improves water pressure and distribution in the Central District Water System.

New Well #07 Connection Project (Kokoland)

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$250,000      Contractor: In-house

Benefits: The new well improves water pressure and distribution in the Central District Water System.

Vaipito Tank Liner Installation Project

Funding Source: USEPA      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$170,000      Contractor: ASPA

Benefits: This project improves the water supply in the village of Vaipito on the eastern side of Tutuila. It also stabilizes water pressures to households in the area.

Vailoa ACP Replacement Project

Funding Source: US-DOI      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$928,044      Contractor: In-house

Benefits: This project improves water pressure and reduces water loss in the Village of Vailoa.

Lift Station Upgrade Project

Funding Source: US-DOI      Status: 100% complete

Project cost: \$700,000      Contractor: ASPA

Benefits: Enables the Sewer division to monitor flows from respective reticulated areas and quantify inflow and infiltration into the system.

**WATER PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**

Wells                    - 100% completed

Boosters                - 90 % completed

Inline meters         - 86 % completed

PRV                     - 80 % completed

Tanks                   - 83 % completed

**SOLID WASTE DIVISION**Futiga Road to Landfill Project:

Funding Source: US-DOI      Status: 100 % complete

Project cost: \$665,416      Contractor: McConnell Dowell

Benefits: This new road to the Futiga Landfill reduces wear and tear to trucks and equipment delivering MSW to the landfill. It also provides a permanently sealed road for residents in this area.

**New Solid Waste Equipment**

20 cubic yard Front-end-loader trucks	- 2
Rover Trucks for MSW Bin Collection	- 2
24 Ton Excavators	- 2
Bomag Landfill Compactor	- 1
4 Cubic Yard Steel Bins-	100

Benefits: The new equipment enables the Solid Waste division to improve operations and reduce operating costs.

**POWER DIVISION****Generator Major Overhaul & Preventive Maintenance**

S-1 3.5MW GE 16V250 Major Overhaul	100% completed
7 x 3.5MW GE 16V250	100% completed
7 x 1.5MW CAT 3516	100% completed
3 x 2.5MW Cummins QSK95	100% completed
New LED Street Lights	7,000 installed
Distribution Line Preventive Maintenance	90% completed

**Territorial Energy Office**

The Territorial Energy Office program goals consist of reducing energy costs for low-income households by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes while simultaneously ensuring their health and safety.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a life-saving program that provides assistance for low-income households with frail elderly, individuals with disabilities, young children, by helping to pay a percentage of electrical bills with ASPA. Payments are normally made to ASPA directly to help and make sure households' electricity is not terminated. It pays a percentage of electricity bills, and it also provides energy-efficient appliances for low-income families. Without the LIHEAP Program in American Samoa, households will experience disconnection of utility services and it will also create dangerous situations especially for elders and young children. Low-income households faced with unaffordable energy bills result in cutting back on life-sustaining necessities, including food, medicine and medical care.

Two new programs that are pending final federal approval are as follows:

- **Low-Income Home Water Assistance program (LIHWAP).** This is a new grant that provides funds to assist low-income households with drinking water and wastewater bills. This is very similar to the LIHEAP program that provides assistance to low-income households in paying a portion of their electrical bill. Both LIHEAP and LIHWAP are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS).
- **Home Solar Panels:** The Federal Department of Energy is constantly researching

new opportunities regarding green energy to combat “Climate change.” TEO looks forward to providing this service once approved to our community and will work closely with ASPA to ensure that the basic infrastructure to accommodate Home Solar Panel programs for families are in place with regards to use and proper storage measures.

## Parks and Recreation Developments

The American Samoa Department of Parks and Recreation continues to preserve, upgrade, and protect local parks by providing safe and clean resting areas for future generations to enjoy. On March 16, 2021, American Samoa was awarded \$2,175,771 from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant. Together with the apportionment of 2020, DPR has a total of \$3,910,243.00 of awarded grant funds through the LWCF. With these awarded funds the American Samoa Department of Parks and Recreation will be able to provide a full slate of park and recreation programs, facilities, and services that respond to the various needs of the citizens.

### Reconstitution of the Parks and Recreation Commission

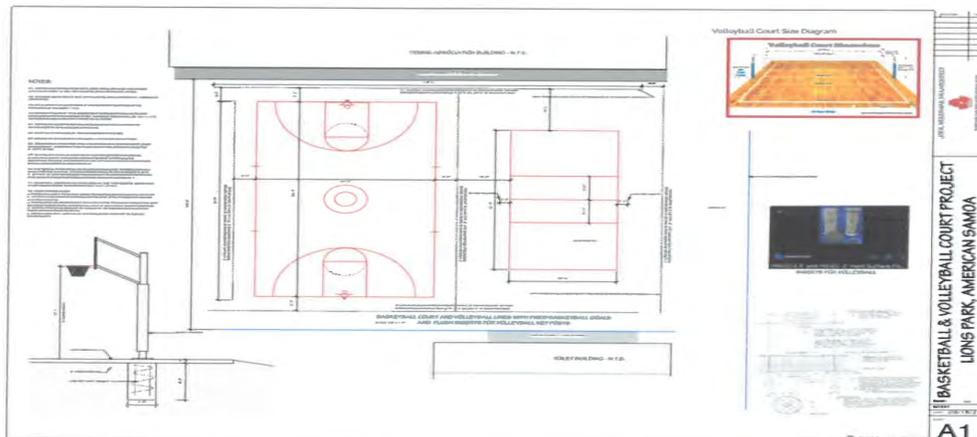
On April 21, 2021, General Memorandum 086-21 reconstituted the Parks and Recreation Commission. Title 18 Chapter 18.0101 established within the executive branch of the government the parks and recreation commission, which consists of 5 members appointed by the Governor for terms of 2 years, except that the fourth and fifth initial appointees shall serve for one year only in order to establish staggered terms.

### Lions Park Kids Playground Renovation

Plans are in place to renovate and refurbish the existing playground. A second kids’ playground (new) will be installed next to the existing one for children ages 2 to 5 years.

### Lions Park (Basketball/Volleyball Court Upgrade)

The basketball court in Lions Park will be extended to add a designated only volleyball court. The project cost is \$216,444.00 and will be funded by the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This project is with the grantor awaiting approval for funds dispersal in the 1st quarter of 2022.



## Parks Division

Fifteen local parks including two recreation facilities and three historical sites are maintained by DPR. A total of \$34,097.00 was collected from park reservations and leases for 2021.

## Fale Samoa style Picnic Shelters

Nine (9) fale samoa will be built along the shoreline - adjacent to the proposed living shoreline protection system - in support of the anticipated heavy use of the park system in the coming years. The Department of Public Works is working on the plans and specifications.

## Fagaalu Park

The sewer and water systems have been attached to the new restroom and the park is now declared open for use. A site and construction plan request is currently with the Department of Public Works to widen the field into the parking lot. The basketball court backboards and rims will be replaced as soon as the shipment arrives.

## Onesosopo Park

Plans for Onesosopo Park include an open Outdoor Sports Field with bleachers and a running track. The parking lot will be located west of the field, next to the stream. In addition, a playground will be installed east of the field adjacent to the restroom.

## Pago Pago Park

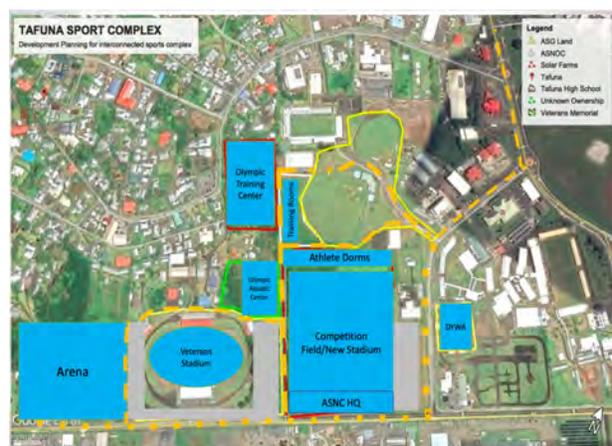
Plans are in place to refurbish and upgrade the Pago Park Kids playground. Light fixtures will also be added to complete the lighting system for court #1.

## Award of IFB -061-2021: The Tony Solaita Grand Stand Repairs and Renovations

On July 28, 2021, IFB-061-2021 to repair and renovate the baseball field was awarded to PJ Corporation and RCT Builders. RCT Builders was awarded Section 1: Construction to repair and renovate the roof, grandstand, and VIP room totaled \$87,359.00, and PJ Corporation was awarded Section 2: Light Fixtures totaled \$79,989.00. DPR is working collaboratively with ODAPM on this project. ODAPM will cover the cost for RCT Builders while DPR covers PJ Corporation. Both contractors are currently working on completing the project.

## Tafuna Sports Complex

DPR is working together with the Department of Commerce to plan the Tafuna Sports Complex. This complex will be a designated area where facilities will be built to accommodate future needs of the community in recreational and sport's needs. Promoting good physical health requires this type of long-term planning to ensure our people will see a healthy reason to use these facilities. The request for qualifications (RFQ) has already been submitted to the Procurement Office to begin the process of making this complex reality.



## Information & Communication Technology

### American Samoa Government Technology Office

On September 2, 2021, Executive Order 05-21 established the American Samoa Government Technology Office (TO) to centralize the management of ASG IT efforts and to identify and defend against cyber security threats. The TO is charged with building a cost effective, state-of-the-art IT digital network to enable ASG to conduct secure day-to-day data, information transactions and communications within and between ASG departments and the general public.



### ASG Technology Office Main Distribution Frame Room: EOB

Phase I of construction of Main Distribution Frame (MDF) room has been constructed to begin TO infrastructure buildout. Similar Intermediate Distribution Frame (IDF) rooms will be built on respective floors of the EOB.

### ASGNET

During Phase II, TO intends to begin the buildout of a central secure ASG network (ASGnet) that will facilitate and enable ASG departments to share data and information securely, that will control and monitor access of ASG departments and users to the outside internet, provide a platform where ASG applications and data can reside securely in a formal data center, provide access control to who has access to what data, at what time, and to ensure all devices connected to the ASGnet are managed (e.g. kept up to date with all security patches, etc.) and controlled with a standard image.

### Enhanced Cybersecurity Measures

Currently, ASG's connectivity to the internet is primarily protected by ISP firewalls which are configured at minimal settings to allow for an open, uncensored internet, leaving ASG exposed to hacking and man-made computer viruses. With the enablement of fast high-speed internet to American Samoa via the Hawaiki fiber cable, an opening has been created for hackers to gain access and tunnel deep into ASG department IT networks and infrastructure that are not secure or safe guarded. It is only a matter of time before an attack is exposed. We have the opportunity to build a proper enterprise IT network for ASG that serves as the secure platform to enable ASG departments to collaborate safely and securely (on ASGnet), have secure storage and controlled access to data across departments, plus have the ability to filter and monitor ASG information and data not allowed to flow outside of ASG including ability of hackers to obtain data and information with ultimate intent to shut down and or destroy all Government records.

### TAP Funding

The TO received \$125,000.00 under the Technical Assistance Program grant funding from the USDOJ OIA. This discretionary funding was used to assist in the overall upgrade of the Office of the Governor's computer network, digitization of office records, and to defend against cybersecurity threats.

**Redundancy of Connectivity** -One of the goals of the ASGTO is to seek a viable alternative source for connectivity. The recent outage in Manu'a during July, 2021 has validated that an alternative source for connectivity is much needed.

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# STATE OF EDUCATION

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The education of our children is critical to meeting the demands of the 21st century. The alarming reality of COVID-19 across the globe has changed the way our education systems have operated.

## **New Education Standards during COVID-19 Pandemic**

### **Remote Learning Program for schools**

The beginning of 2021 found the new Administration continuing to provide support and services to students, instructional personnel and parents in the midst of a Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic and the Territory's efforts to keep our community safe and Covid-free has demanded that ASDOE develop and implement remote learning or distance learning programs for students. To prepare students in event of school closures, the Department of Education has invested in hybrid and blended models of education to support virtual and face-to-face learning.

Schools have implemented remote learning plans and have set aside days for face-to-face instruction and days for online instruction. This allows students to continue learning from home should school closures happen. Instruction is done face-to-face and is conducted virtually via online learning platforms such as Google Classroom and IXL.

Federal funding has allowed for students to be provided with technological devices that will enable them to access their classes. The creation of the Technology Integration Office assists instructional personnel on how to make the most of their skills on the internet so that student learning is enhanced.

### **Remote Learning Plan Drill**

On October 20, 2021 the Department of Education conducted a Remote Learning Plan Drill to identify issues and challenges to improve the DOE Remote Learning Plan. To make the most of devices that students are provided with, the connectivity or accessibility of the internet must be improved, therefore the Department of Education is working closely with internet service providers to ensure that students have access to internet connectivity with the ultimate goal of strengthening distance and blended learning.

## **Teacher Salaries / Reclassification**

One of the most notable achievements of the Lemanu-Talauaga Administration was the implementation of teacher salary increases based on General Memorandum 121-21.

The Reclassification of ASDOE personnel is a work in progress. The proposed reclassification reflects the educational credentials of instructional personnel in addition to the number of years of service within ASDOE as well as performance evaluations. The skills and years of experience are

also factors to be considered in addition to training or professional development by all ASDOE personnel.

## **Equitable Education Opportunities for All Children**

COVID and ARPA ESF-SEA funds have provided support for both the public and private schools across the Territory to help safely reopen and sustain safe operations of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the students. These funds have supported Infrastructure/transportation improvements, student learning and professional development enhancements, and Protection and Resiliency. Providing all our students, both Public and Private Schools, with the best and safest classroom environment and in our effort to prevent, prepare for and respond to the pandemic is a priority for the Administration. The Department of Education has developed and implemented its Master Facility Plan. This plan will guide the future investment of hundreds of millions of dollars of federal recovery funds earmarked for reconstructing the public school system in the Territory. Contracts are in place for several projects in furtherance of this plan.

### **STEAM Education**

STEAM Education combines Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics in educational settings. The Department of Education held a meeting on October 21, 2021 to introduce government departments to the STEAM program. The STEAM program encourages kids to be curious learners who seek innovative solutions to real-world issues allowing them to build skills they need to thrive as adults. Government departments shared their requests for what skills STEAM could share with students to build a stronger and safer community.

### **ASDOE Truancy Program**

The ASDOE Truancy Program was implemented to ensure students attend school regularly. Truant officers currently monitor students who have chronic attendance issues. Aside from attendance, they assist students with drug and substance problems by working collaboratively with law enforcement and the juvenile detention center in reporting violations of policies as well as other delinquent behavior. Currently there are 26 truant officers working at all 6 public high schools and 17 elementary schools.

### **Marching Band Initiative**

During the late 60s, 70s, and early 80s it was not uncommon to have seen almost every village with a marching band. The marching band era slowly faded in the 90s and now is almost non-existent. The Marching Band Program is the Governor's Initiative to revive the lost art that once flourished in our Territory by reviving Marching Bands at the schools and eventually extending the program to the community. The Marching band is another avenue for students to tap into their creativity and build their self-confidence.

Band classes have been implemented in the following high schools: Fagaitua High School, Samoana High School, Tafuna High School, and Leone High School. A total of 172 students are



enrolled in these newly formed band classes, and are learning to read music and play various musical instruments. The program has procured and received its first shipment of instruments and the program is well underway. Students from the Tafuna High School band class performed during the annual TAOA Christmas Program. We are expecting this initiative to flourish and have a marching band perform during the Flag Day 2022 celebrations.

## **Aligning Education, Workforce and Economy**

Workforce development creates resilient people and leads to sustainable economic growth. Workforce and economic development of the Territory starts in the schools. The ASDOE plans to align with the Territory's workforce needs as identified by the ASG Department of Commerce, and offer new career pathways in these areas.

### **CTE career pathways programs**

The ASDOE Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division's mission is to prepare students for the workforce through quality career and technical education. Two recently launched CTE career pathways programs (Accounting Career Pathway and the Health Sciences Career Pathway) continue to be offered in 4 of 6 secondary schools. All secondary schools will offer more career pathway courses that are aligned to the workforce development plan and economic development plan of the Territory. The goal is to eventually offer these two career pathways in All 6 ASDOE Secondary schools and provide the necessary resources to successfully implement these programs.

### **CTE student certification**

As of the end of June 2021, 55% (79 of 143) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Trades and Career Pathway senior students were certified for entry-level jobs by the NOCTI-Job-Ready Assessments. DOE's goal is to increase the percentage of CTE students certified in their trade or content area/program of study.

### **CTE Teachers Certification**

As of the end of September 2021, 33% (10 of 30) CTE teachers were certified in their content area through the NOCTI-Teacher Assessments, CTE teachers can be multi-certified in as many areas related to their content area that they're teaching. For as long as the CTE grant funding allows it, it will offer the opportunity to the teachers. This is the second year that the CTE Division is funding the NOCTI-Teacher Assessments for teachers.

### **The Student Work-based Learning Experience Program (WBLEP)**

WBLEP continued to be implemented for CTE senior students enrolled in the Trades and Career Pathways programs at NVTHS and some of the regular high schools.

### **Vocational Technical High School Workforce Initiative**

This is a partnership between the Department of Commerce and the Department of Education – Career & Technical Education division to support workforce development at the only vocational technical high school in American Samoa. This is to align business education with commerce and

private sector needs, and to create a pipeline of certified students who join the workforce straight out of high school. The Department of Commerce purchased and delivered 25 new PCs equipped with the needed software applications.

### **Employability and Life Skills Program**

21st Century Employability and Life Skills Program was piloted during Summer 2021, in collaboration with the DHR's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) where 12th Graders from the different public schools were taught employability skills (resume writing, interviewing, filling out job applications), life skills and financial literacy and computer applications (Microsoft Office).

### **The Adopt-A-School Program**

The Adopt-A-School Program continues to be a high-priority program and the Authorities, Departments, and Offices maintained their efforts throughout the year to address issues requested by the leadership of the adopted school.

### **US Department of Education Risk Compliance**

As required, Treasury in collaboration with the High-Risk Task Force (HRTF) has submitted its current report to the US Department of Education Risk Compliance to address long-standing high-risk items. The Territory awaits comments to prepare for the next reporting period due date. As most high-risk items correlate to audit findings, once addressed in Treasury's financials, the high-risk items will be resolved.

Additional Department of Education Accomplishments for Year 2021 are as follows:

- The return of the Maintenance Division from the Department of Public Works to ASDOE
- The development and the implementation of the AS Master Facilities Plan
- Revision of ASDOE's vision and mission
- The implementation of a tracking system of ASDOE equipment and property to address USDOE's high risk concern for all ASDOE assets.

## **American Samoa Community College**

The College's adaptation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic can be considered one of its major Accomplishments during FY 2021. FY 2020 saw ASCC begin an extensive transition towards online learning, with the development of the MOODLE system and the training of faculty, staff and students in the system's use. In FY 2020 ASCC initiated a ratio of 67% in-person instruction, with the remaining 33% done online. This ratio of in-person to online instruction has continued into FY 2021, and takes the form of in-person classes held Monday through Thursday, with Friday set aside for online instruction only.

With its transition towards online learning, which includes the capability of switching into that mode completely should the need arise, ASCC continues to utilize the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) as a crucial resource. Beginning in FY 2020, the College used

HEERF resources to provide cell phones for both teachers and students with limited internet access. During FY 2021 ASCC continued to upgrade its technological capabilities thanks to HEERF, with a clearly defined portion of the funds earmarked for the institution and another portion dedicated to student support.

At the end of FY 2021, 90% of the College's personnel had been fully vaccinated. Beginning in summer 2021, incentives were made to students for them to get their vaccinations. These included the waiving of registration fees, the awarding of prizes, and the holding of raffles at student events throughout the fall 2021 semester for which vaccinated students were provided with tickets.

### **Enrollment Increase**

During Summer 2021, enrollment at ASCC increased by 108% in comparison to Summer 2020. The increase may have been related to Pandemic conditions, which made travel off-island inaccessible to many, but not being able to reach Hawaii and the US mainland gave many of our Territory's young people a reason to take advantage of the higher education opportunities offered by ASCC.

### **Feleti Barstow Public Library**

The mission of the Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL) is to serve as a center for lifelong learning dedicated to meeting the informational, technological, and cultural literacy needs of all age groups by providing both current and historical reading and instructional materials in a variety of formats. As the central public library for American Samoa, the FBPL serves as a model for other libraries and information centers to increase access to reading materials and the promotion of literacy.

<b>FY 2021 Circulation Statistics</b>	
Total Users	22,089
Library Card Patrons	15,673
New Library Cards FY21	314
Books in Collection	44,854
Books Loaned	4,846
Children's Programs	134
Children's Program Attendance	4,713
Homework Club Attendance	9,093
Reference Questions/Inquiries	1,320
Computer Lab Use	3,873
WiFi Access	213

### **Children's Programs**

Children's programs are offered five days a week and are all well attended. Early Literacy programs are offered twice a week for 0–4-year-olds. K-8 grade students enjoy after school programs that feature different themes daily. There are also two Literacy Stations that feature K-12 educational applications in several content areas. Usage statistics are drawn monthly for assessment.

Homework Club is open to all ages and gives students the opportunity to complete homework assignments in a study hall environment with the help of library staff. The Summer Reading Program is an annual program for students to continue reading into the summer months and avoid the summer slide due to school summer closures. Being a popular program requiring registration, there is typically a waiting list for the program every year. The FBPL partnered with BYU Alumni again this year after a break in 2020 due to COVID restrictions. There were about 150 participants this year. The public library will look to build on this success.

### **Computer Lab Services**

The computer lab remains a critical service for patrons who need computer or internet access. Basic computer courses are offered to the general public or to departments/businesses by request.

The Territorial Administration On Aging has brought in several cohorts of classes recently. Medicaid has reserved the lab for patient registration on recent repatriation flights. Students have frequented the computer lab after school to complete homework assignments and research. There were close to 4,000 patrons using the lab this year.



### **Polynesian Photo Archives**

The continued preservation and storage of cultural and historical images for public access has been an ongoing objective of the Polynesian Photo Archives. This project has allowed FBPL to add chronologically from 1975 to 2011 through the addition of the Keith Dahl Collection featuring close to 800,000 photos. The Keith Dahl Collection was recovered from his studio and relocated to the FBPL PPA for processing that includes cleaning, sorting, numbering, and scanning. This collection totals nearly 800,000 photos and has dominated the work in the PPA over the last two years. This year alone, with the help of summer volunteers, 148,632 photos were scanned and 26,327 photos were uploaded through the release of the Keith Dahl Graduation and Pageant Collections.

### **American Samoa Library Consortium (ASLC)**

FBPL, through grant funding, continues to provide access to an Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) for several information entities in American Samoa that include the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office, American Samoa Community College Learning Resource Center, and Kanana Fou Theological Seminary. The Manu'a High School Library was added as part of the consortium. The OPAC allows each entity to catalog their holdings for the public to view online. Together forming the American Samoa Library Consortium with FBPL as the lead entity. Training on the Destiny Library Manager system is ongoing for several consortium members as some have new staff and others benefit from refreshers.

### **Ofu Community Center**

Ofu Community Center remains a satellite branch of the FBPL. It is a collaboration of three Authorities of the American Samoa Government. The American Samoa Telecommunications Authority is responsible for the internet and communication provisions, the American Samoa Power Authority provides the building and the Feleti Barstow Public Library provides the reading materials and manpower to operate the community center. The Territorial Librarian makes quarterly site visits to the Ofu Community Center.

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# STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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## CLIMATE CHANGE

In an era of the global climate crisis, American Samoa is among the most vulnerable island countries in the Pacific impacted by sea-level rise, floods, landslides, and catastrophic natural disasters. The impacts of climate change across the Pacific over the past few years has reminded us to be more aggressive in mitigating critical areas with resiliency and sustainability in mind. Investing in and safeguarding our Territory's critical infrastructure is a priority for this Administration.

As reported in June 2021 by the Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment (PIRCA) report on *Climate Change in American Samoa*, key climate change issues affecting American Samoa include human health risks, stronger cyclones, coral reef death, and coastal flooding. Threatened resources include high-value coastal infrastructure and the millions of dollars that ocean ecosystems add to our economy annually. Climate change is expected to disrupt many aspects of life in American Samoa.

Sea level rise and storm surge are serious threats to people, coastal development, and infrastructure in American Samoa. Implementing measures to protect critical infrastructure such as roads, drinking water wells, power lines, wastewater facilities, healthcare facilities, and schools are now more important than ever in order to protect life and property and ensure the continuity of operations of these critical facilities



It is of this Administration's utmost priority to minimize the impacts of catastrophic disasters, both man-made and natural, in American Samoa through long-term planning, infrastructure designs, use of appropriate technologies, and implementing culturally-appropriate approaches to community resilience. We are committed to combating climate change and the protection of our natural resources and the environment to ensure that we pass on these valuable assets to our future generations to come. This commitment is reflected in the number of programs that have been continued and implemented this year. The following are some of the progress and program activities towards the protection and conservation of the Territory's coastal and environmental priorities.

### Executive Order Establishing the Governor's Resilience Office

Climate change has presented unique challenges for the Territory including sea level rise, coastal erosion, an increase in extreme weather events, saltwater intrusion, and rising temperatures. While the Territory has made many strides to address some of these impacts, there has not been a centralized office to coordinate and streamline efforts to address climate change. In June 2021,

AS-EPA, DMWR, ODAPM and the Governor's Office worked towards the formation of a Climate Change Commission to help protect and sustain our environment for generations to come.

On December 23rd, Executive Order 010 - 2021 was signed establishing the Resilience Office that will coordinate ASG's climate change efforts in conjunction with the Climate Commission to ensure that federal and local resources are brought to bear in addressing this existential threat to the globe. Further, the Resilience Office will address historically fragmented and siloed efforts of the government by coordinating a holistic and comprehensive approach to the Territory's future planning and development initiatives.

## Resiliency & Mitigation

### The Office of Disaster and Petroleum Management

#### Pre-Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation

The Office of Disaster and Petroleum Management (ODAPM) administers the Hazard Mitigation (HM) federal awards and the Public Assistance (PA) funding which is available to the Territory when disasters are presidentially declared. The HM program ensures pre-disaster mitigation projects are selected based on a priority rating determined by the Hazard Mitigation Council. The council is chaired by Lieutenant Governor Talauega who serves as the Governor's Authorized Representative. The American Samoa Hazard Mitigation Plan is a narrative that reviews and evaluates risks and is updated by the HM team. The Plan fulfills the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) requirement for a mitigation planning process that “first, ensures federal assistance to the people of American Samoa following significant disasters, and second, allows the American Samoa Government to compete for federal mitigation program assistance annually.”

#### Hazard Mitigation Council Identifies Mitigation Actions

In August 2021, the Hazard Mitigation Council convened to review and prioritize 55 potential hazard mitigation projects. The HM Council scored the projects based on multiple characteristics including the number of hazards addressed, the benefit to people, critical facilities impacted, and how the project addressed climate change. The scores ranged from 147 to 505 with estimated project costs between \$100,000 to \$25 million.

RANK	DEPT	PROJECT	LOCATION	COST	SCORE
1	ASDHS - 1	TSUNAMI SIREN SYSTEM	Island wide	\$6,000,000.00	505
2	DPA - 2	RUNWAY SHORELINE PROTECTION	Tafuna	\$5,000,000.00	475
3	DPA - 4	AUNU'U WHARF RECONSTRUCTION	Aunu'u	\$2,500,000.00	425
4	DPA - 3	PORT RESURFACING	Fagatogo	\$25,000,000.00	411
5	DPA - 1	FALEASAO WHARF STRUCTURE	Faleasao	\$25,000,000.00	408
6	ODAPM	LEONE COASTAL	Leone	\$5,000,000.00	407
7	DPA - 5	OFU AIRPORT	Ofu	\$2,500,000.00	404
8	ASCC - 1	ASCC FLOOD DRAINAGE	Malaieimi	\$1,000,000.00	399
9	DPW - 10	#7 Candidate: Rte 6 (Afono, Masefau), Rte 1 (Matuu, Gatafau)	Afono, Masefau, Matuu and Gatafau	\$4,600,000.00	398
10	DPW - 3	COST U LESS DRAINAGE	Ilili	\$5.0M	384

#### Post Disaster Recovery

The Public Assistance (PA) program is funded with post-disaster recovery monies to assist in the recovery and repair/rebuilding of damages sustained during a disaster.

The table includes the FEMA release of funding from January to December 2021.

\*This amount does not include the total authorizations for all disasters to date and the advanced closeout amounts.

#### Total funds received – Jan to December 2021

<b>Disaster</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Vaccination COVID	\$3,974,534.56
TS Gita	\$6,213,432.02
Flood 2014 Parks&Rec	\$77,009.12
Tsunami ASPA	\$ 39,624,596.23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$49,889,571.93</b>

#### ODAPM Notable Accomplishments:

- On October 1, 2021, FEMA notified ODAPM of No findings or issues with the recently completed Financial Monitoring Review of FEMA federal funds in the amount of \$15,236,063.08
- The responsibility for oversight of the American Samoa Government Property Insurance was returned to the ODAPM from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner in June 2021.

#### CDBG-DR (Disaster Recovery) Award

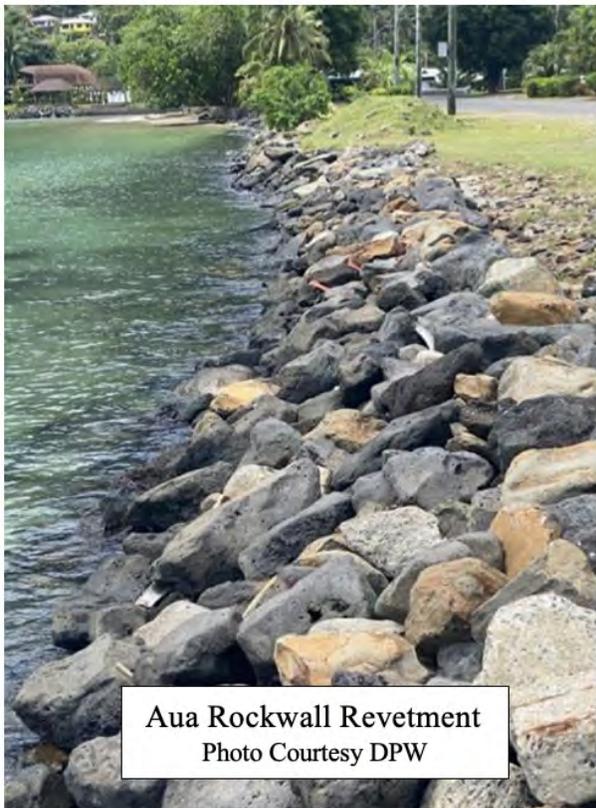
HUD has allocated \$23 million to the American Samoa Government for unmet needs from Tropical Storm Gita. Although allocated such total funding, there are several requirements to be delivered before its release. The Department of Commerce staff has been working closely with HUD representatives and have completed many requirements and expect funds to be released soon and essential staff to be hired to fulfill program tasks and responsibilities. As of January 2021, HUD has authorized 20% of the \$23million in administrative and planning costs to help prepare the Territory in completing its CDBG-DR Action Plan.

#### CDBG-MIT (Mitigation) Funds

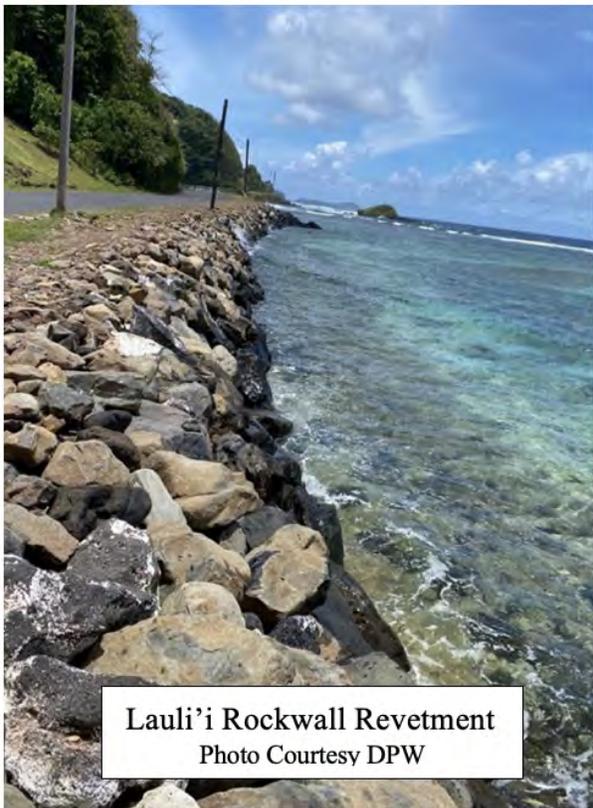
The American Samoa Government has been allocated \$1.4million in CDBG-MIT (Mitigation) funds. The Department of Commerce is in the planning stages. The program is a unique and significant opportunity for eligible grantees to use this assistance as it relates to Tropical Storm Gita.

#### Seawalls

The Department of Public Works continues to provide maintenance work and emergency repairs especially on drainage and shoreline work due to the effect of climate change on our island. To protect the inland region from wave action and prevent coastal erosion, rock walls or revetments are placed along the shoreline.



Aua Rockwall Revetment  
Photo Courtesy DPW



Lauli'i Rockwall Revetment  
Photo Courtesy DPW



Aua Sea Wall

The proper design and engineering of seawalls to address sea level rise in high wave energy coastal areas is a priority and an ongoing effort. Numerous shoreline protection projects are currently in progress and pending design. (See list below.)

<b>SHORELINE PROTECTION PROJECTS PENDING DESIGN</b>	
	<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>
1	Alao to Tula Shoreline Protection
2	Auto Shoreline
3	Lauli'i Shoreline Protection
4	Aua Shoreline Protection
5	Vatia Shoreline Protection
6	Asili Shoreline Protection
7	Nua & Seetaga Protection
8	Nu'uuli Shoreline Extension
9	Route 001 Matafao to Gataivai Shoreline Protection
10	Utulei Beach Park Shoreline Protection

## **Protection and Conservation Ongoing Departmental Efforts**

This past year, the Administration has remained highly committed to administering and maintaining all of its coastal outreach and awareness efforts through its annual pledges such as DOC's Coast Week Programs, Island Wide Cleanup Initiative, and Wetland's conservation program.

### **2021 Coastweeks: Balancing our Coastal Heritage and Economic Prosperity**

The successful coordination of another successful Coastweeks program by the Department of Commerce with a Coastweeks theme "Balancing our Coastal Heritage and Economic Prosperity" focusing on increasing awareness of the value of the land use permitting system, wetlands, coastal hazards mitigation efforts, and the use of GIS tools for better decision making to strike the balance between our coastal heritage and economic prosperity. ASCMP strengthened current partners and secured additional partners as evident in the participation and partnerships established and solidified.

### **Project Notification & Review System (PNRS)**

PNRS Board administered by The Department of Commerce main function is to conduct environmental review for all major land-use permit applications or proposed projects in American Samoa. The PNRS contribution in fighting climate change is through its environmental review work by its members to ensure propose projects adhere to best management practices and conditions in addressing flooding issues, minimizing soil erosion and sedimentation runoff in streams and coastal waters, shoreline protection, preventing landslides, and stringent conditions on emission sources in the Territory to name a few.

In addition to the environmental review process, the PNRS is essential for the social and economic well-being of American Samoa. Public infrastructure development and individual home-owner projects can co-exist with climate change adaptation in a robust PNRS review system. The American Samoa Government strives to maintain a healthy environment in balance with our economic and social goals.

## **American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency**

### **Re-Constituting of the American Samoa Soil & Water Conservation District**

In May 2021, new members of the American Samoa Soil & Water Conservation District Board were appointed and AS-EPA was designated as the lead agency to administer all Board related matters. Prior to this, the District was inactive for several years and could not fulfill its mandate without any staff. The Board is currently working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to complete administrative requirements to house the District employee at their office in Pago Plaza as part of an ongoing MOU. It is expected that the revival of the District will help bring in more funding to help promote soil and water conservation projects in the Territory.

### **Island Wide Clean-Up Initiative**

In efforts to beautify and clean up the Territory, the Island Wide Clean-up Committee (IWCC) continues to be implemented during this Administration. All Departments, Agencies, and Authorities continue to reserve the last Friday of every month as a clean-up day in their assigned zones throughout the Territory. This island beautification project has resulted in over 10,000 pounds of trash removed from roadsides, streams, and coastal areas since January 2021.

### **Launching of Aluminum Can Recycling Program in October 2021**

The Keep America Beautiful (KAB) and the Coca-Cola Public Spaces Recycling Bin Grant Program supports the communities across the United States by providing bins to expand recycling activities. The AS-EPA submitted its application to the KAB program in 2018 and due to nationwide shipping delays to the Territory as a result of COVID-19 the recycling bins arrived early this year. AS-EPA launched the 2021 Aluminum Can Recycling Program. Due to the limited recycling bins, AS-EPA will start with five Public High Schools and five Private High Schools. The focus of the entire program is to provide recycling in the communities that have limited recycling resources available and to foster green behavior among students and ensure they will continue to foster recycling activities in the future. As resources become available, AS-EPA intends to expand this program to include all schools in the future.

### **State Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Cooperative Agreement (SEJCA Program Grant Recipient)**

American Samoa is the first Territory to receive a grant award under the SEJCA Program. The SEJCA Program provides funding through a competitive grant process to support eligible entities to work collaboratively with underserved communities to understand, promote, and integrate approaches to provide meaningful and measurable improvements to public health and the environment in those communities. Under the SEJCA Program, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA) announced a \$200,000 grant to the AS-EPA to address air quality issues across the island of Tutuila; specifically, the issue of open burning. AS-EPA will use this funding to address underserved residents' increased exposure to outdoor pollutants caused by open burning. The project will strategically install four air quality monitoring stations across the island of Tutuila to measure real time air quality.

Data will assist in inter-agency collaborations between AS-EPA, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Department of Public Health (DOH) to make informed decisions and plans to improve air quality on the island. The air quality information will also be used in an educational program for villages about the negative health and environmental impacts of burning yard waste compared to the positive benefits of composting. Finally, the AS-EPA Air Quality Branch will train other partners such as nonprofit organizations to use and analyze the air quality data to develop and implement projects that would help AS-EPA in its efforts to raise awareness about air pollution. As such groups become trained on data analysis, they instantly become ambassadors and advocates of a clean and healthy environment.

### **E-Waste Management Program**

The AS-EPA has partnered with the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA), Office of Property Management (OPM), and National Park Services (NPS) to promote the proper disposal and recycling of electronic waste (e-waste) through an E-Waste Management Program for the Territory. This program is a first of its kind for American Samoa and it aims to prevent the accumulation of e-waste by encouraging the public to deliver their e-waste at identified drop-off points to prepare for shipping to recycling centers. The E-Waste Management Program will address some of the imminent environmental issues in the Territory such as the accumulation and improper disposal of e-waste, the overfilling of the Territory's only landfill, and the health risks posed by the accumulation of e-waste. To date, AS-EPA is working with a local contractor to collect electronic waste from ASG departments. The E-Waste Management Program has collected e-waste to fill two 20' containers at 75%. Once the two 20' containers are filled with e-waste at a 100% capacity, AS-EPA will send a 40' container of E-Waste to an E-Waste recycler facility in the United States (US).

### **Notice of Intent (NOI) and Notice of Arrival (NOA) Process**

The AS-EPA Pesticide Branch has implemented the NOI and NOA review process to ensure that pesticides and/or devices imported for personal use or for sale and distribution are in compliance with local and Federal Pesticides regulations. AS-EPA's Pesticide Branch has conducted multiple trainings for business owners and other government organizations on the newly implemented review process and the different applications the process entails. AS-EPA has issued public notices to inform the general public on the new process and is currently raising awareness of the new review process through various media outlets. AS-EPA will continue to work closely and collaboratively with American Samoa Government Department of Customs and Immigration (ASG DOCI) to ensure the functionality of this new review process and uphold the integrity of such process through consistent training events.

### **Sanitary Survey of ASPA's Drinking Water System**

The AS-EPA recently completed two Sanitary Surveys of the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA) water systems. The Satellite System as well as the Manu'a Islands Water systems were the two selected structures that were inspected. The inspection is part of AS EPA's regulatory program that requires the agency to review ASPA's public water system performance, maintenance and upkeep, record keeping, microbiological and chemical analysis, water treatment, and illegal connections. The sanitary survey also identifies any deficiencies with the water production as well as the distribution of the water to ASPA customers. Sanitary surveys

are performed to prevent the risk of waterborne diseases, identify technical and managerial capacity development needs and document compliance deficiencies. No significant deficiencies were identified for these systems and minor deficiencies have been communicated to ASPA.

### **AS-EPA Operates its Nutrient Analyzer**

AS-EPA's Seal Analytical nutrient analyzer is fully operational. This accomplishment marks the first time in which AS-EPA is able to conduct nutrient analysis in its water laboratory. Analysis runs specifically for Nitrate, Nitrite, Ammonia, Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus. With this initiative, AS-EPA has expanded its water laboratory analysis capabilities for these specific nutrients and plans to include testing of certain chemicals in the future. AS-EPA has been performing monthly analysis for the Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG) and Piggery Compliance Program (PCP) for streams. Data has been included and entered onto the Water Quality Monitoring Program for streams database. The Nutrient Analyzer is now available to facilitate water quality reports, research, special projects and most importantly this will help leaders make informed decisions on critical water quality issues moving forward.

### **Removal of Sea Hawk Vessel**

In 2015, the commercial fishing vessel Sea Hawk No. 68 ran aground on the fringing reef near the entrance to Nu'uuli Pala Lagoon. The Lagoon is a shallow embayment that is important as a breeding ground for the marine life of the Territory and is considered the largest mangrove swamp on Tutuila. Within days of the grounding, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Oil Spill Response Organization (OSRO) contractor anchored the vessel to the reef with reinforcing bars and started cleanup operations. Since completion of cleanup operations in June 2015, the abandoned 97-foot fiber reinforced plastic long line fishing vessel remains grounded at the entrance to Pala Lagoon, continuing to damage the coral reef and negatively impacting the Territory's coastline. In December 2020, H&H Inc, developed an interest in the removal of the Sea Hawk and sought assistance from AS-EPA and DMWR to complete permitting requirements needed for vessel removal. As a result, H&H Inc. successfully secured a U.S. Army Corps Nationwide Permit and a land use permit for vessel removal in 2021. The project is slated to commence in early 2022.

### **Contaminated Soil Remediation at the Former Navy Fuel Farm in Aua Village**

The AS-EPA worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and its contractor to oversee the fuel contaminated soil remediation and treatment project at the Aua village. This removal action included removal of petroleum-contaminated soil and free product to the extent practicable and further assess groundwater, surface water, and sediment conditions at the tank sites. Major activities of the project were completed in October 2021. All fuel contaminated soil was removed from each site and treated in the Thermal Desorption Plant that was set-up at the Onesosopo Park and the clean soil was used to backfill the excavation at each site. AS-EPA is awaiting the final report from the USACE and their contractor to determine if further work is needed at the site.

## Governor's Biodiversity and Conservation Office

### Wetland's Conservation Project

In addition to the monthly island wide cleanup, the Governor's Biodiversity and Conservation Office is charged with ensuring the protection of our wetlands. This year alone, field crews removed approximately 7,000 lbs of waste from the Pago Pago-Vaipito and Fagatogo perennial streams to help protect the significant cultural, biological, scientific, and medicinal value therein. The Field crews also helped clean-up the Papa, Amalie, Sauino, Vaitele and Sagamea streams, mangrove rainforests and estuaries within Nu'uuli village and removed approximately 6,000 lbs of waste from these natural areas. These cleanup efforts help prevent huge amounts of trash and debris from damaging adjacent coral reef ecosystems and ruining the Territory's landscape.



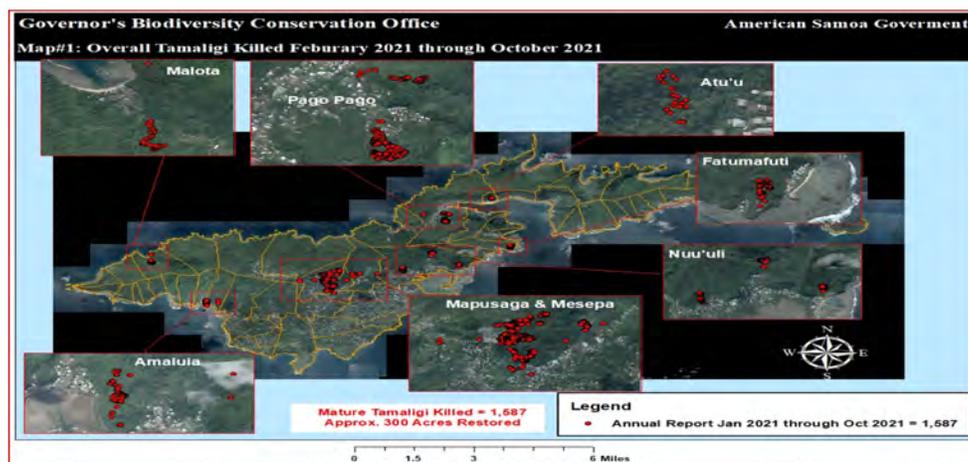
### African Tulip Tree Eradication Project



The Tulip's wind-borne seeds are like an endless army of parachutists released from airplanes which travel the wind currents, possibly colonizing distant mountain slopes of Tutuila. Due to heavy recruitment of African Tulip seedlings in both forest gaps and highly disturbed forest areas, eradicating existing mature Tulip tree populations help restore infested native plant communities in lowland and montane forests of Tutuila. The Governor's Biodiversity and Conservation Office field crew removed 1,794 mature non-native African Tulip tree populations from Taputimu and Malaeloa lowland forests. No Tulip trees reported from Aunu'u and the Manu'a Islands. It is crucial that these islands be kept Tulip and Tamaligi free. Pictured are dead skeletons' views of invasive African Tulip trees after herbicide treatments by the field crew in the Taputimu lowland forested areas.

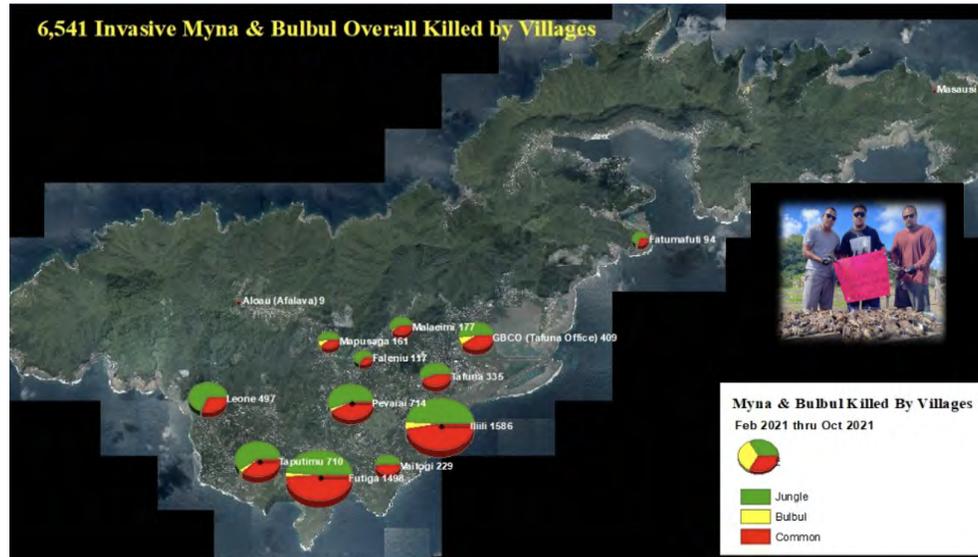
### Tamaligi Tree Eradication Project

The Tamaligi's expansive growth blocks sunlight from native forest habitats and is capable of dominating native Samoan rainforest ecosystems. The Governor's Office field crew removed 1,587 invasive large Tamaligi populations and reclaimed 300 acres of intact Samoan native rainforests across Tutuila.



## Invasive Myna & Bulbul Bird Control Projects

These invasive birds exert pressure and compete with native wildlife for nesting hollows, food, and breeding habitats. Non-native bird species pose health hazards, are noisy, and are recognized as agricultural pests. The Governor's Biodiversity and Conservation Office field crew trapped and dispatched 6,541 invasive bulbul and myna bird species using live trapping methods. More than 50% of the non-native bird species dispatched were trapped from Futiga, Ili'ili, and Pavaiai villages.



## Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources

### Australasian Bat Society's 1st Pacific Island Bat Forum

Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) successfully hosted the Australasian Bat Society's 1st Pacific Island Bat Forum local hub at ASCC Land Grant for interested public and the scientific community. The American Samoa hub was the largest in the Pacific with over 70 attendees participating over 4 days.

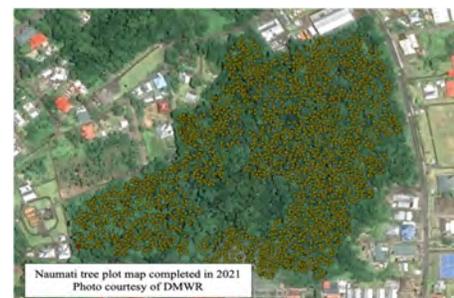
### Scientific paper in the Journal of Vegetation Science

A scientific paper was published in the Journal of Vegetation Science based on work completed by the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in collaboration with Dr. Edward Webb over the past few years.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/share/2KEX3ARICVEP9DPZJXNT?target=10.1111/jvs.13064>

### Naumati Forest Mapping Project

The Naumati Forest Mapping Project was completed by the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in which all trees over 10 cm were mapped, identified, and measured. Over 4,300 trees were mapped during the project.



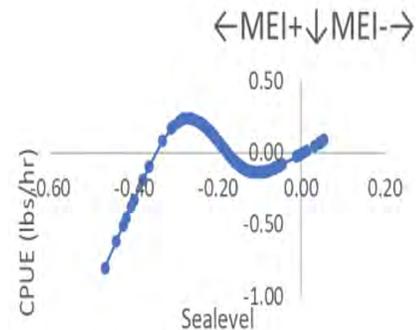
## Surveys

The Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources has completed a total of 712 Surveys in 2021 including the Manu'a islands.



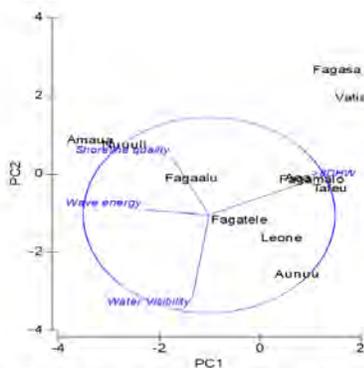
## Assessments identifying the impacts of climate on nearshore coral reef fisheries

The Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources has completed the assessment identifying the impacts of climate on nearshore coral reef fisheries. This involved a review of nearshore fisheries data with 30-year climate data. Results provided some evidence that extreme El Niño (ME+) and La Niña (ME-) events and long-term sea level rise has negatively affected gleaning of octopus and perhaps other nearshore coral reef fishes in American Samoa. This suggests that climate variability and change is affecting food security in the Territory.



Climate Variability such as sea level rising impacting the nearshore resources in Am. Sam  
Courtesy of DMWR.

## Assessment of Threats to American Samoa's Coral Reefs

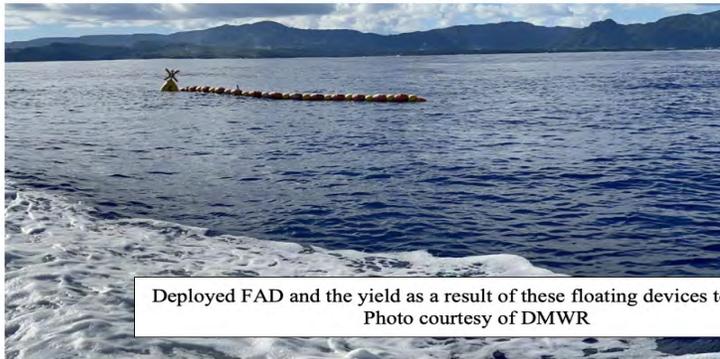


Results indicating that the ocean is warming (>8 degree heating weeks) has affected reefs in north Tutuila (Fagamalo, Tafu, Fagasa and Vatia) and low shoreline water quality in Fagaaulu, Amatau and Nu'uuli). Courtesy of DMWR.

An analysis of the major threats to American Samoa coral reefs has been completed. The analyses used multi-year data on coral reef benthic characteristics and fish with climate, watershed, water quality and environment variables. The data suggests that wave energy and water visibility influence coral reef characteristics. This assessment is important for local managers for reef and area specific intervention to protect coral reefs.

### Deployment of aggregation devices

DMWR deployed three fish aggregation devices (FAD) in 2021. FADs attract tuna and other pelagic fish and support fishermen's livelihood and recreational activities since they make it easier to fish. These FADs also support fishing tournaments, especially the Tutuila Flag Day tournament where over 1,000 lbs of fish were caught.



Deployed FAD and the yield as a result of these floating devices to fishers.  
Photo courtesy of DMWR



### Cuvier's Beaked Whale carcass Assessment

DMWR Staff completed an assessment of a very rare Cuvier's Beaked Whale carcass on a remote beach on the island of Ta'u, Manu'a. The team hiked over 4 miles to collect important samples from the whale in order to provide better scientific information on the health and diet of this elusive species.



Wildlife Biologist Nerisa Tava and Wildlife Assistant Biologist Ailao Tuakalei collecting samples from the Cuvier's Beaked whale in Ta'u, Island.  
Photo courtesy of DMWR

### Joint Enforcement Agreement

Completion of the Joint Enforcement Agreement with the NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) enforcing federal regulations regulating the highly migratory fish species and its activities in the region and international ports.



Foreign Fishing Vessels monitored as part of the international Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention to combat IUU activities. Photo courtesy of DMWR

## Renewable Energy Committee

The Renewable Energy Committee adopted the goal of having 50% of American Samoa's energy come from renewable energy sources by 2025 and 100% by 2040. This energy goal is consistent with renewable energy projects already completed in the islands of Tutuila and Manu'a along with ongoing and upcoming renewable energy projects (Wind, Solar and Waste to Energy Projects).

## Food Security

The frequent unstable changes in the climate increase concerns in areas of food security and ensure effective plans are in place for a more resilient Territory able to sustain its economy and safeguard the overall welfare of our people. American Samoa's limited natural resources and remote location is a constant challenge. Over 95% of food consumed in our Territory is imported. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused shipping delays resulting in empty shelves at local grocery stores and empty shipping containers all over the island. Plans are underway to reconfigure the main port terminal in Fagatogo in order to adapt to these rapid changes. Climate change, labor disputes, and trade agreements beyond our control have increased vulnerability to our economic growth. Food safety and food security continue to be a priority and the Administration's support of agriculture demonstrates this. The administration continues to support food production while putting underutilized agricultural lands to use and creating jobs while diversifying our economy.

## Department of Agriculture

### Farm Fairs

Food security, food safety and what is available in the Territory are the main focus of the 2021 Farm Fairs when it comes to locally grown produce. The Department of Agriculture (DOA) hosted four Farm Fairs this year. Generous cash prizes have been given to farmers as an incentive in hopes of sparking the interest of residents to grow more locally grown produce and become less dependent on imported products.



### In-house Grant-Writer

For many years, the DOA outsourced the role of the Grant-Writer to local, privately owned businesses to write grants and provide consultant services for each of their written approved grants. Issues surfaced in prior years within the department concerning its federally funded projects. Because the grant-writer was not an internal position, it left the DOA's grants manager and staff in a perplexed situation with the inability to administer projects, meet deadlines, no data collection and inaccurate performance reports submitted to the Federal Grantors. After so many years, DOA successfully employed its first Grant-Writer on June 7, 2021. There have been great resolutions with the collaborative work of the DOA employed Grant Writer and Finance Manager addressing old, existing troubled grants to procuring and administering new federal grants.

The in-house DOA grant-writer received its first grant worth \$500,000.00 for the DOA in the month of August. With the approval of the ASDOA grant proposed project and initiative to launch a call center to assist local farmers with mental health issues within the agricultural communities; the

DOA is within its periphery to establish its first call center in the history of the DOA. The call center is scheduled to launch in January 2022. Three more newly awarded grants were written and submitted by the DOA contracted grant-writer who has been the DOA's grant-writer for about six years. The DOA was awarded four new grants in 2021 with a combined total of \$1,259,066.59. (see table below). Notably, the DOA is moving forward to reaching its internal goals for improvement. With the DOA Finance and Grants corroborating the financial security and stability of the DOA operations, it is without doubt future results are viewed to be promising for the DOA and its workforce.

**American Samoa Government - Department of Agriculture  
New Grants 2021**

<b>Award Date &amp; Year</b>	<b>New Awarded Grants</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Expiration Date</b>
1 8/20/2021	2021-70035-35799 – Farmers De-stress	\$500,000.00	1 year	08/31/2022
2 9/7/2021	21MGFSPAS1002 – Micro-Grants	\$133,002.50	4 years	09/29/2025
3 9/15/2021	21SCBPAS1030-00 – Specialty Crop Phase II	\$268,786.53	3 years	09/29/2024
4 9/15/2021	21SCBPAS1071-00 -Specialty Crop Phase I	\$357,277.56	4 years	09/29/2025

### **Youth Program-Theory Cession**

The Department of Agriculture conducted an outreach with a total of 30 students to inspect 4 farms. Students learned about the different kinds of vegetables and fruit trees that are grown locally. Students were shown how farms are inspected in regards to the proper use of legal pesticides prior to and after planting, how pesticides should be stored and disposed of, and how produce should be washed and stored. Students were also taught that pesticides, fertilizers and seeds are to be labeled in English/Samoan language; otherwise, they will be confiscated. Students were divided between store inspections and compound orientation. Students were also taught about Certificate of Compliance procedures. Students learned the basics on Agriculture and duties of the extension division, food security and food safety definitions and their importance, and basic classification of plants. This program aims to educate the youth on agricultural practices while simultaneously sparking the interest of students to join agricultural fields of employment.

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# State of Security

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## State of Security (Law Enforcement, Public Safety and Border Security)

The safety of our people and protecting our borders from the escalating influx of illegal substances and weapons is of great importance to all of us. In achieving these objectives, the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Treasury continue to enforce existing laws.

### Department of Public Safety

During the first year of the Administration, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) has taken steps to institute new changes that will be cost efficient to the government while providing improved services to the public upon appointment as Commissioner for DPS identified the following: 1) the need to update the DPS Organizational Chart and Operation Procedures manual 2) the need to redistribute DPS resources such as personnel and resources, 3) update technical assistance, 4) Purchase equipment, 5) complete the READ ID project, and 6) submit the FY 2022 Budget to reflect adequate funds for operational cost. DPA has taken corrective measures in resolving some of the problems hindering the efforts of the department to better serve the public.

The following are steps that have been and will be taken to address some of the problems within the department:

- Taken corrective measures to update changes for a new proposed Organizational Chart which will allow the department to be more efficient
- Will update the present Operating Procedure Manual (OPM) to reflect the new Organizational Chart and update policies and procedures as a guide for our department's daily operations
- Redistributed police personnel based on the geographics and population of the areas on Tutuila and Manu'a Islands
- High Court transferred two vehicles to DPS
- Submitted a request to purchase four new enforcement marked units to be funded under the fee collected by the Court from traffic citations, which was submitted and approved by Legislative measure
- The Boating Safety Program purchased a \$242,000.00 39' Powered Catamaran Rescue Boat currently named "SIREN" which was dedicated October 12, 2021. DPS Marine Patrol Grant also has a vehicle unit assigned to all DPS stations including 2 substations in Manu'a to assist in marine enforcement and responding to search and rescues
- NHTSA funded the purchase of three police motorcycles for the Traffic Division and motor vehicles to enforce traffic laws. MCSAP funded the purchase of two vehicles to assist DPS in the enforcement of our territory's Commercial Carrier laws and assist our first responders



- Pursued assistance through federal grants with the ASG Department of Commerce (DOC), ASG DHS, and the Governor's Office (U.S.D.O.I Grant Application for TAP-2021 Federal Grant) to purchase four New Mini Pumper Quick Attack-Fire Trucks to assist our firefighters in combating fires. The Mini Pumpers will be assigned to the Fire Substation as the initial responder to await the response of the main fire engine
- Through the Office of Motor Vehicle (OMV), DPS is preparing to launch American Samoa's REAL ID Driver License and ID Card. Holders of this new Driver License and ID Card (REAL ID) will allow U.S. Nationals and U.S. Citizens residing in American Samoa and the Manu'a Islands to go through TSA security checkpoints at U.S. Airports, Federal Buildings, and their Driver License will be accepted in all Fifty States and U.S. Territories. The deadline for American Samoa to complete the REAL ID Project is October 1, 2022. The Department of Public Safety estimates that the American Samoa REAL ID Project will be launched before July 2022.

## **National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy**

American Samoa was selected along with Connecticut, Michigan, and West Virginia to participate in the National Governors Association's (NGA) Policy Academy on State Strategies to Improve Care for Stimulant and Polysubstance Use, intended to help state leaders identify and implement best practices to improve care and reduce overdoses among people who use opioids and stimulants, or combine substances, which is known as polysubstance use.

The NGA Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is sponsoring the year-long policy academy which began in October to support Governors' offices and other senior state officials to move beyond preliminary plans to developing and implementing action plans that result in significant actions and strategies to address the overdose epidemic.

With support and partnership from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NGA has been working with states and territories to help them reorient interagency approaches toward comprehensive strategies and plans in their efforts to address overdose issues. The aim of this effort is to help facilitate a focused process through which states and territories develop statewide comprehensive approaches in their efforts to address overdose and substance use treatment issues writ large.

## **Department of Legal Affairs**

The Department of Legal Affairs has oversight and is charged with the mandate of enforcing local laws and regulating entry into the Territory. Protecting our border security is a combined effort with Public Safety, Port Administration, Homeland Security and Agriculture. It remains a priority of the Administration to protect and ensure overall safety of the general public. The Department of Legal Affairs also spends a significant number of resources and time offering legal sound advice and assistance to other line and support agencies.

The following table is a breakdown of cases handled and completed throughout the year 2021 by the Attorney General's Office.

<b>Total Cases Handled</b>					
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Criminal Division	5,231	5,228	5,801	5,275	21,535

<b>Total Cases Completed</b>					
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Civil Division	147	309	293	411	1,160
Travel Division	348	608	1,207	1,116	3,279

### **Border Management System**

Since February 2021, the Immigration Border Management System (BMS) has been fully implemented. The BMS has given DLA and the Immigration Office the tools to maintain control of our borders and to manage, track, and monitor the immigrant population, assist with and provide travel authorizations to include Entry Permits, OK Boards and Issuance of Certificates of Identity.

### **Immigration Office**

In conjunction with the Immigration Board, the Immigration Office oversees and regulates the requests by foreigners to visit, reside and/or work in American Samoa. It also administers and regulates the entry and departure of the individuals at the ports-of-entry to American Samoa, namely, airport in Tafuna and through Pago Pago harbor. Since January 2021, entry permits were suspended per Governor's Covid-19 emergency declaration with authorized exceptions for StarKist guest workers approved by the GAR. Approximately 700 qualified workers from Samoa arrived under the StarKist Guest Worker program.

### **Digitization Program**

The digitization program began in July 2021 with the hiring of 7 (3 TR Office and 4 Immigration) digitization specialists. During this reporting period from July to September the Territorial Registrar Office digitized a total of 2691 files/folders with a total number of 20,150 pages. The Immigration Office digitized a total of 2,245 files with a total number of 81,084 pages.

### **TALOFAPASS Program**

The DLA team was responsible for the screening of travel documents and providing OK Boards totalling 629 arrivals and 1,414 departures utilizing the TALOFAPASS.

## **Department of Homeland Security**

American Samoa has been under an active Public Health Emergency which triggered the partial activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for more than 15 months since January 2020 from Measles Epidemic to Coronavirus on March 18, 2020. These critical missions have taken a physical and emotional wear and tear on the community of First Responders. The

Department of Homeland Security has actively supported eight Repatriation Flights since February 1, 2021 and the Quarantine & Security Operations for Commercial Flights between Hawaii and Samoa. The Department of Homeland Security continues to enforce and conform with the most recent COVID-19 Health Declaration which encapsulates current restrictions to protect the health and safety of our people from Coronavirus.

The passage of FY2022 operating budget will allow the Department to implement long standing priority projects along with addressing rehabilitation and upgrade of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the launch of the Fusion Center, and the Power of Arrest for Law Enforcement agents assigned to the Department to assist with Drug Enforcement and Border Patrol.

Guided by current Strategic Plans and FEMA approved Work Plans, the Department of Homeland Security has set the following high priorities in building a more prepared and resilient Territory, accomplished by enabling information sharing between member agencies, building enforcement capacity and improving response equipment and technologies.

- Launch the Fusion Center and the Emergency Operations Center Renovation Project
- Establish and Launch FirstNet Program
- Enforcement of READ-ID Regulations (010CT2022)
- Establish the Territory Border Patrol and Surveillance Program
- Tsunami Warning System Rehabilitation Project

Ongoing infrastructure projects, specifically the retrofitting of the Territorial Emergency Coordinating Office (TEMCO) as the central hub for all Emergency Operations coordination in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, has the ability to upgrades necessary to coordinate and communicate with our federal partners with NOAA, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Defense, and Non-Governmental Organizations.

### **Fusion Center**

The Fusion Center is nearly completed pending the endorsement of interagency agreement. The Standard Operating Procedures, Privacy Policy, and Memorandum of Understanding are complete awaiting departments' signatures. Internal initial training within the department has already begun. Training was conducted at the Fusion Center with the following courses: Operations Security (OPSEC) Awareness, Introduction to Physical Security, Counterintelligence Awareness, Identifying and Safeguarding Personnel Identifiable Information (CDSE); Incident Command System 100 (FEMA) & Incident Command System 200 (FEMA). There are more than 20 more training module courses in order to complete the initial training for Fusion Center as well as off island courses.

### **FirstNet Program**

The FirstNet Program was born out of lessons learned from terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. On February 2, 2012, FirstNet became Public Law 112-96 with the Director's intended vision to "provide emergency responders with the first high-speed, wireless nationwide public safety broadband network." Since March 2021, the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with American Samoa Telecommunications Authority, has launched the platform to

the community of First Responders with the goal of expanding to private sector and NGOs that plays active and vital roles in the Territorial Emergency Operations Plan (TEOP), published and adopted since 2017. Following the earthquake tremors that triggered Tsunami Warning for American Samoa on March 4, 2021, the Department of Homeland Security following its After Action Review (AAR) identified flashes of progress with School Evacuation Plans while other areas that lacked effective and clear communication resulted in self-inflicted mass hysteria and became counterintuitive to plans published in the TEOP for adoption and execution.

Both Internet and Phone Service providers encountered outages in phone lines which attributed to inadequate coordination and communication from territorial leaders to community and public at large. While American Samoa was fortunate that no Tsunami ever reached its shores, the memory of September 29, 2009 still haunts the lives of those who experienced the effects of that tragic day. The FirstNet Program took center stage as a viable option for Disaster Management and its network of stakeholders. To date, more than seven departments and agencies have opted to enroll into the FirstNet Program. The endless possibilities of mobile application for core users will help with planning and communication during events of natural or man-made disasters.

### **Real ID Act**

Since February 8, 2018, following the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Gita, the Department of Homeland Security in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety has partnered with LedgeLight Technologies to satisfy statutory requirements of the Real ID Act for the Territory of American Samoa. To date, American Samoa is 100% Completed with Real ID and awaiting the Certification Checklist to be finalized for submission to US Department of Homeland Security for their validation and certification (approving Facility's Security Plan, SOP, Software, Hardware, Staff Training, and meeting SSA requirements) to begin issuing Real ID cards to qualified residents and citizens of American Samoa and the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited travel for LLT and federal partners to complete their review and validation process. Flight restriction has prohibited this final step. Bringing this operational concept into fruition is due to the collective efforts and partnership of the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Attorney General in the last four years.



### **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant**

FEMA released the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Notice of Funding Opportunity on August 9, 2021. The application period is open until January 28, 2022. ODAPM is in the process of applying for FEMA funds under the BRIC for a complete overhaul of the Homeland Security tsunami alert warning system.

**Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)** has awarded projects to EMS to assist in purchasing a new Ambulance, Department of Public Works for a Dump Truck and for the Office of Public Information-KVZK TV for Generator Housing and the Customs' Division for Security

Cameras at the Airport. These projects are at 70% completion. There are other ongoing projects and many more will be awarded in the next Fiscal Year. The following projects are underway:

### **Security Measures for Critical Structures**

This investment seeks to enhance physical security measures for a critical structure of the American Samoa Government (ASG). The critical structure covered under this investment is the Pago Pago International Airport. Enhancing security measures for the aforementioned site is imperative to ensuring the safeguarding of critical assets and operations for the ASG. As the only major Airport in the territory, the Pago Pago International Airport located in Tafuna serves as a critical site requiring adequate access control and physical security. Customs Division Surveillance Security Cameras (16-total) to be installed within the Airport (Arrival Area). This project is ongoing. Equipment and materials have been received and the installation is scheduled to begin January 2022.

### **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – Emergency Response Capabilities**

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provides only Emergency Prehospital Medical Care, Stabilization, Evacuation/Transport, and Medical Rescue Support (Mountain and Sea) services to the residents of the Territory of American Samoa, there are no private Emergency Medical Services or Ambulance Services in the Territory. These critical, lifesaving, first response capabilities are vital to the territory's efforts to ensure adequate levels of response capabilities among its first response agencies. This investment is intended to provide the territory's EMS agency with one ambulance unit, with accompanying equipment. The EMS Ambulance Unit is in transit to PPG via ocean freight and is scheduled to arrive January 2022.

### **DPW Dump Truck**

This investment provided the Department of Public Works with equipment that would enable the Department to provide quality and efficient service to both public and private sectors. During all hazard's disasters, DPW functions are not limited to only mapping of evacuation routes and identification of critical infrastructure locations. DPW also provides debris management services for the Territory. Debris management plays a crucial role in the Protection, Response, and Recovery mission areas. Project was completed and the dump truck was released to DPW in July 2021.



### **Office of Public Information – KVZK-TV**

This investment is to enhance the hardening of the existing structure at Office of Public Information KVZK-TV to house the Standby Generator for their daily operation in case the commercial power is no longer in operational, especially in an event of disaster. The enhancing and hardening portion is in progress for the procurement bidding process. The ATS and other electrical wiring including the installation of the Standby Generator will be the responsibility of ASPA through an agreement for ASDHS to pay for the materials only. ASDHS will deploy the Generator Unit, once the existing structure is completed.

## **Criminal Justice Planning Agency**

The Criminal Justice Planning Agency is the Territory's designated state agency for the Department of Justice grants, and has been instrumental in ensuring that federal funding assistance is provided to our local criminal justice system agencies. These funds are crucial in ensuring that much needed services and programs with our criminal justice are established and continued. To date, CJPA has been awarded numerous federal grant funding from the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), to include the following:

### **SMART FY 2021 Support for Adam Walsh Act Implementation Grant Program:**

The Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) Support for Adam Walsh Act (AWA) Implementation Grant Program assists jurisdictions with developing and enhancing programs designed to implement and maintain requirements under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, specifically Subtitle A of Title I of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA). The Territory has been awarded \$400,000.00 under this funding.

### **BJA The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG):**

The JAG Program is the primary provider of federal criminal justice funding to states and units of local government. Through this opportunity, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) approved the territory's application and the award in the amount of \$454,543.00 has been received by the CJPA.

### **OVW Violence Against Women Act Grant (VAWA):**

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is awarded to the American Samoa Government to improve the criminal justice responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and to increase the availability of services for victims of these crimes. The award in the amount of \$616,964.00 for 2021 has been received by the CJPA.

### **OVW Sexual Assault Service Formula Grant (SASP):**

The SASP award for 2021 has been received in the amount of \$68,933.00

### **OVC Victims of Crime Act (VOCA):**

The VOCA grant funding will enhance crime victim services in the territory. The CJPA through its sub-grantees delivers direct services to victims and survivors of crimes throughout the community. The award for 2021 in the amount of \$344,292.00 has been received by the CJPA.

### **BJA Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT):**

The RSAT Program is to assist states and local governments to develop and implement substance abuse treatment programs in state and local correctional and detention facilities and to create and maintain community-based aftercare services for offenders. The goal of the RSAT Program is to break the cycle of drugs and violence by reducing the demand for, use, and trafficking of illegal drugs. The RSAT grant award for 2021 has been received in the amount of \$122,253.00

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*Issued by the Department of Justice, the total grant funding reported for all 2021 awards thus far allocated to the territory of American Samoa amounts to \$2,006,985.00. The CJPA anticipates additional funding from the rest of the grant applications submitted on behalf of the American Samoa Government.*

### **New established partnerships and COVID-19 Funding**

In support of the fight against illegal drugs, the CJPA has entered into a partnership with the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in support of their marine enforcement efforts under our drug enforcement border interdiction project, as well as the Department of Administrative Services in support of their law enforcement services. There have also been established partnerships with the Office of Samoan Affairs in support of our Community Based Policing services as well as individual villages who have sought assistance from the CJPA on this endeavor.

### **Memorandum of Understanding:**

A Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Department of Public Safety, Office of Samoan Affairs and the Department of Education; defining and outlining the Mission, Goals and Objectives, Roles and Responsibilities of each partnering agency, of the School Resource Officer Program to benefit the children of American Samoa.

### **COPS E-Learn Training:**

Law enforcement/community officers who are selected to join the program will be required to attend and successfully complete an online training on the core areas of the program, within three months of being selected. The training is available online at <https://copstrainingportal.org>. The COPS CHP Program Manager at the Criminal Justice Planning Agency will be the facilitator to administer training on how to access and complete the E-Learn Training.

### **Reinstatement of OJJDP Program:**

The formula grant(s) for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention projects came to a halt in 2017/2018 when the grantor, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) demanded that we establish a new State Advisory Group (SAG)/Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC). With the establishment of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council Board, the OJJDP program was reinstated this year.

### **Reinstatement of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council Board:**

The JJAC advocates for the prevention of juvenile delinquency and the purveyance of a continuum of sanctions for juveniles in local communities. The Advisory Council is tasked with advising the Governor and Legislature on Juvenile Justice issues; identifying and advising agencies on the development of their programs in local policies, programs and practices; assessing juvenile related issues in the community and needed services. The OJJDP is at the last stage of finalizing its 2021 Title II Grant Funding Awards. It is anticipated that the grantor will award the grant application submitted on behalf of the American Samoa Government favorably momentarily.

**Purchase of new EMS Ambulance units for both Tutuila and Manu'a:** The Emergency Medical Services division of the LBJ Medical Center requested assistance from the CJPA to acquire new ambulance units at the beginning of the year. The fully loaded unit was specially built and ordered from the U.S. mainland. The second unit has been ordered through Samoa Motors Inc. and is making its way to the territory.

## Office of the Secretary of American Samoa

### **Comprehensive Administrative Rule Reform Project and Priorities of the Secretary**

In 2019, former Governor Lolo Moliga issued an Executive Order to reform the rules and regulations (Rules) to alleviate unnecessary regulatory burdens. Upon taking office, the Administration revitalized the Rule Reform Project (Project) and placed it directly under the auspices of Lt. Governor, who, based on the Revised Constitution of American Samoa, also serves as the Secretary of American Samoa (Secretary).

The Office of Secretary of American Samoa proceeded with two very distinct approaches for the Project: first, via the Rule Reform Initiative, and secondly, via the Modernization Initiative.

Despite a tough 2021, the Office of Secretary of American Samoa was fortunate to have been awarded two grants from the U.S. Department of Interior to help the office realize their Rule Reform goals totaling approximately four hundred and eighty-four thousand dollars. The first grant helped launch the Rule Reform Initiative itself, and the second will help with the Modernization Initiative.

The Office of Secretary of American Samoa has reached two very important milestones in their efforts. First, they have hired two full time Legal Consultants to assist with the Project and second, they have published and distributed copies of a Manuscript of the American Samoa Administrative Code, the first in 32 years.

### **Rule Reform Initiative**

The Rule Reform Initiative consists of two distinct actions: First and foremost, the need to compile and consolidate all of the existing rules into a single document that is easily accessible to the public. Secondly, the need to review and then reform any rules that have become regulatory burdens on the people of American Samoa.

### ***Manuscript: Compile and Publicize all Rules between 1990 and 2021***

The last known official compilation of all the Rules in American Samoa was printed in 1982 with a supplement that was printed eight years later in 1990. Throughout 2021, the Office of Secretary of American Samoa has gathered 32 years-worth of rules and regulations promulgated by all of the ASG's departments, agencies, offices, boards, and commissions, and placed them into a Manuscript to be made available to the public.

The Manuscript also serves the distinct purpose of establishing a starting point from which Reform of the Rules can be made in a sensible and orderly manner not to mention making these Rules available to the public in a single cohesive document.

***Reform the Rules to Alleviate Regulatory Burden***

Since September of 2021, the Legal Consultants, in consultation with the Rule Reform Panel, have been coordinating and working with a select group of ten high priority ASG Departments to reform their rules.

Additionally, an analysis of the statutory authority for each department in this initial group was also conducted simultaneously to ensure conformity to modern times and has resulted in Statutory Reform Recommendations which are currently under review and consideration.

**Modernization Initiative: Priorities**

With the Rule Reform Initiative well under way, the Office of Secretary of American Samoa is now taking the next step of modernizing the role of the Secretary of American Samoa.

***Digitization Project***

All of the Rules that have been promulgated by ASG between 1990, as well as the Public Laws passed by the Fono, all Executive Orders issued by the previous and current administrations, as well as General Memorandums, are in the process of being scanned and digitized for posterity.

To carry out this aspect of the initiative, a systemized approach is being developed and tested to make this a reality. This includes the purchase of scanning equipment to scan these documents, purchase of a document management system to serve as our database within which these documents are stored, organized, and made readily accessible, and lastly, development of a publication system to ensure these documents are available to the public on demand via a locally designed and implemented website using locally available talent.

This initiative also encompasses the current duties of the Secretary. For example, plans are in development to promote efficiency in providing Notary Commission services to those interested in becoming Notaries Public. This is to be accomplished by making Notary Courses available online and on-demand as well making the Notary examinations available online to be taken at the convenience of the Notary applicant.

**Office of the Administrative Law Judge**

The Office of the Administrative Law Judge (OALJ), in addition to ongoing determination of contested cases and appeals throughout the year 2021 reports the following:

**Comprehensive Agency Rule Reform Project**

The OALJ is pleased to be a part of the CARR Project authorized under EO No. 001-2019 and reauthorized as amended by the Governor under EO No. 001-2021. The Rule Reform Panel (RRP) is chaired by Lt. Governor Talauega in his capacity as Secretary of American Samoa (SAS). The undersigned Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) is one of the 7 Panel members. In 2021, the undersigned ALJ has devoted an extensive number of hours in helping to develop training materials

and personally conducting training sessions, alongside other Panel members and SAS staff for over 40 ASG agencies. Training has been focused on building capacity in agency designated Rule Reform Officers (RROs) to review and recognize agency rules that need to be amended, repealed, or written for the first time. The training involves assisting RROs to become familiar with rulemaking concepts and even identifying statutory changes that may be needed to be recommended, through their directors, to the Governor to implement agency best practices. At this time the CARR Project has hired 2 legal consultants who are assisting the RROs in their tasks set forth in EO No, 001-2019. The ALJ is authorized to assist agencies in their rules pursuant to A.S.C.A. 4.0602(b). The ALJ, as part of this legislative mandate and as further authorized by the afore EOs via the CARR Project, has not only trained over 40 RROs, the ALJ is also ongoingly providing early input" to the legal consultants to ensure the administrative appeal process through the ALJ is set up in agency rules as contemplated by the ALJ Act.

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## Key Demographics

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The Administration is committed to the empowerment and development of opportunities for the following key demographics across the Territory.

### Youth and Women Programs

#### Summer Youth Employment Program Expansion

The Administration expanded and enhanced the Summer Youth Employment Program through additional funding. With the increased funding, the 2021 SYEP saw a massive increase in its enrollment of participation. Approximately 1,500 interns of The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) participated in a 8 week program across the public and private sector.

#### First OALJ Mock Hearing for Assigned Career Seeking Trainees

While the OALJ staff worked with SYEP participants on work assignments, dress code, work ethics, the undersigned ALJ conducted a review session with the participants as to the hierarchy of laws usually taught in high schools, the 3 branches of government, and the purpose of a hearing's office and its distinction from the judiciary. At the end of their tenure with the OALJ, the participants held a mock OALJ hearing for a hypothetical Workmen's Compensation case. SYEP participants played the roles of: ALJ, marshal, clerk, attorney, injured employee, medical experts, audience. The SYEP participants enjoyed role playing with their fellow participants through learning in an "almost" real hearing experience. Due to the positive feedback, the undersigned ALJ intends to incorporate mock hearings when it is assigned groups of young persons to work with in the future.

The undersigned ALJ has informed the contact for the recent STEAM program for youth that the OALJ would be interested in working with the DOE on a pilot project to allow high school students to virtually view a public OALJ hearing for learning purposes and to promote interest in OALJ careers or legal careers in general among high school students.

#### Meal with a Mentor

The Department of Commerce in partnership with the Finafinau Student Environmental Stewardship club hosted the second Meal with a Mentor program by opening the Lee Auditorium free of charge to allow more students from other high schools to participate in this career development exchange for high school students. The third and by far the biggest Meal with a Mentor session was a collaboration between Finafinau and the Departments of Commerce, Education and Human Resources. This event was held as part of the first Job & Internship Fair on the island for the youth of American Samoa. About 300 mentors and mentees were hosted at the Meal with a Mentor 3.0.



### **“Focus on Your Future” Job & Internship Fair**

The job and Internship Co-hosted by the Department of Human Resources, Department of Education, and the Department of Commerce for the 2021 Summer Youth Interns was open to the public. Various agencies, public and private, joined the initiative by setting up a booth at each job fair site on two separate days to engage and hire.



### **Expanding Educational Opportunities**

A Dear Colleague letter was sent to CSBG on January 11, 2021 regarding the President’s Executive Order on Expanding Educational Opportunity Through School Choice. It addresses the challenges and uncertainties of public health caused by the current pandemic, including the halt on in-person learning; both of which have impacted school aged students and many families across the nation and worldwide. In addressing the impact on learning, CSBG funds may be used to provide emergency scholarships to low income and disadvantaged students impacted by school closure, which is in accordance with the given Executive Order and consistent with the CSBG Act. Furthermore, it is also clarified and reinforced by the Secretary of Health and Human services. Thus, if a community needs assessment identifies a need, as outlined in the Executive Order, scholarships may be used for the following: tuition and fees for a private or parochial school; homeschool, micro school, or learning-pod costs; special education and related services, including therapies; or tutoring or remedial education.

## **Department of Youth and Women’s Affairs**

### **Rise in Health & Wellness Initiative**

Flexible hours and added workout programs to the Governor’s Health & Wellness Initiative has shown an increase of 35% of participants since last quarter. A growth in family members participating in the evening exercise programs plays a huge part in the increase of involvement. DYWA has extended the Health & Wellness initiative time beyond the 3 pm – 4pm to allow staff members and others a flexible schedule to workout. Exercise programs for DYWA Pago are basketball, volleyball, ping pong and access to the weight room is from 2 pm – 6 pm Tuesdays & Thursdays. Exercise programs for DYWA Tafuna Youth Center are Pickleball, badminton, ping pong and walking from 12 noon – 8 pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays.

### **Development of Women Empowerment Society**

The purpose of Empowered Women Empowering Women is to build a local community of women and experts who can benefit from each other. The following programs have been implemented through January-April 2021 under the Women Empowering Women Society:

- **Mother-Daughter Date Night:** Women entrepreneurs sharing business ideas with mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and daughters.
- **Women Empowered Women Gathering:** Open discussions on current issues in the homes and community. Topics included breast cancer screening, educating mothers on signs of suicide, substance abuse, family commitment to matais and mother’s role in the community.
- **Mother’s Day Downtown painting**
- **Sewing to empower**

## Veterans Affairs Office

Our servicemen and women deserve access to quality services and resources to address their local needs. The Veterans' Affairs Office 2021 Accomplishments are as follows:

- Held Virtual Webinar Health Benefits Workshop with the Regional Office, Honolulu, HI
- Remained in contact with the National Guard Bureau in regards to the establishment of an American Samoa National Guard.
- Hosted VFW (Veterans of Foreign War) monthly meetings
- Assisted Veterans with Benefit and Burial Claims

## Disability & Aging Population

It is the commitment of the American Samoa Government to provide our senior citizens and people with disabilities the opportunity to pursue meaningful and productive lives and thrive in a fully inclusive society. This commitment is reflected in the number of programs that have been continued and implemented this year. The following are some of the progress and program activities towards the provision of services for our senior citizens and residents with disabilities.

## Territorial Administration on Aging

TAOA has continued to improve its relationship and levels of trust with federal grantors through its efforts to remain totally compliant with federal funding requirements. Policies and procedures in collecting and timely reporting of program information and activities has resulted in TAOA's eligibility for increased levels of funding available not only to improve, but to develop additional programs. The close working relationship has resulted in more varied and improved levels of service to the seniors of the Territory.

### Congregate Home Delivery Meal

In January 2021, the Territorial Administration on Aging (TAOA) initiated a contract bidding for a Congregate Home Delivery Meal program which enabled Seniors to be served in a restaurant setting rather than in rented church halls as was previously. In May of 2021, Maliu Mai, Night Hawk, Shan J's, Ai Love Boba, and Emelio's have all successfully completed and initiated the Congregate Home Delivery Meal. The overwhelming success of the program's restaurant-based meal program has resulted in a significant increase in the number of Seniors enrolling in TAOA's programs. FY 2020 had 1,562 active participants, and FY 2021 saw an increase to 1,897 active participants.



### Free Transportation to Meal Centers

Two aiga bus companies have been contracted to transport Seniors from the far eastern, far western and north shore villages to restaurant meal sites and to deliver to those who are not able to travel.

This service has enabled TAOA to ensure all Seniors have regular and reliable access to their three hot meals on a weekly basis.

### **Leasing of a Wheelchair-accessible van**

A major and recent accomplishment of TAOA is the leasing of a wheelchair-accessible van which will be used to transport the most vulnerable members of our island's population - the wheelchair bound. The Wheels on Wheels' program will provide wheelchair-bound senior citizens and their caregivers the opportunity to overcome obstacles heightened by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic that have resulted in limited access to necessary health care facilities, nutritional programs, social interactions and local self-improvement programs, the overall goal being to limit possible exposure to Covid-19, and reduce the psychological impact of isolation, tendency toward self-neglect, and vulnerability to financial exploitation and/or other forms of abuse.



### **Development of Certified Caregiver Courses**

#### **Newly Developed Adult Protective Services Program**

TAOA, in collaboration with the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) Nursing Department, offers The National Caregiver Certification Course (NCCC), a 10-week training course for in-home caregivers, free to the community. The course, offered three times annually, is an opportunity to provide the community with well qualified, dedicated and well-trained caregivers who will assist in enabling the Seniors to remain at home to receive the care they need. The NCCC is intended for home caregivers of bed-ridden, elderly, and disabled individuals of any age.

#### **Newly Developed Adult Protective Services Program**

In February of 2021, TAOA applied for and was awarded funding to fully develop an Adult Protective Services Program for American Samoa. Since April of this year, the program has hired a Program Manager to establish TAOA's Adult Protective Service program and to develop basic policies and procedures to guide the program in its initial stages.

#### **Recipient of No Wrong Door Funding: \$100,000**

TAOA, in partnership with the UCEDD, applied for and received a grant of \$300,000 aimed at providing individuals with connectivity during the pandemic. TAOA has targeted a total of \$100,000 to address the specific needs of our Senior Community. The No Wrong Door initiative empowers individuals to make informed decisions, to exercise control over their long-term care needs, and to achieve their personal goals and preferences.

Funding received is being utilized to purchase seventy smart phones, including one year of internet service, to be provided to individuals who are identified as being wheelchair-bound. Recipients of the phones will receive instruction on how to utilize the features of the phones and how to avoid becoming victims to online scams. Twenty-four-hour access to the internet will ensure seniors who have reduced mobility and access to the community will not become even more vulnerable to physical and mental health concerns through the lack of communication with family, friends and the medical community.

### **Computer Lab for Senior Citizens**

In partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, TAOA has recently built a computer lab which will enable seniors the time and place to learn how to successfully navigate through technology in the world of a pandemic. Areas of learning will include but not be limited to:

- How to apply for TALOFAPASS and Safe Travels Hawaii websites
- How to safely utilize social media
- How to avoid online scams
- Approved medical sites for information purposes
- Basic word processing

### **Raise in Minimum Wage of Senior Citizens**

The hourly wage of the Senior Community Service Employment Program participants was recently raised from \$5.21 to \$6.00 per hour.

### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's (OVR) mission is to: "Enable residents of American Samoa with disabilities, to obtain and retain employment and achieve community integration." The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation manages the following grant funds: 1) Basic VR; 2) VR Support Employment; 3) Older Individual Blind; 4) VR Assistive Technology; and 5) State Independent Living Center.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Year 2021 Achievements:

- BASIC VR GRANT initial grant award for FY 2022 received October 2021.
- VR Support Employment grant award for FY2022 received in October 2021.
- IL Older Individual Blind grant award for FY 2022 received in October 2021.
- VR Assistive Technology grant award for FY 2022 received in October 2021.
- State Independent Living Center grant award for FY 2022 received in October 2021.
- Basic VR program completed 34 Employment Outcomes for clients seeking VR services.
- Provided Pre-Educational Transition Services to 43 SpEd high school students this year via the OVR-AS DOE SpEd School to Work Program.
- Provided Transition services to 23 SpEd high school students with Work Placement in the 2021 WIOA Summer Youth Employment Program.
- Support Employment Program coordinated and provided a Two-Week Summer Sign Language class for 10 AS DOE SpEd students during the 2021 summer, at the Office of Voc Rehab Conference Room. Students were provided Training Stipends.
- Completed and provided Career Path and Development Outreach at the DYWA and WIOA Career Fair 2021.
- The Independent Living Program provided assistance and services to 150 plus clients seeking help for durable medical equipment, home modification, reading glasses, supplies and network information with IL partners.
- Living Program COVID-19 award has provided medical beds for persons with disabilities.

Outreach and follow up visits were initiated for clients needing assistance.

- APPROVAL of WIOA STATE UNIFIED PLAN 2020-2023 for American Samoa. This is a mandated activity in support of WIOA STATE funding. The American Samoa WIOA partnership includes AS DHR Employment and Training Division, the Office of Voc Rehab and the ASCC Adult Basic Education Program.
- OVR Assistive Technology Program addressed VR clients whose disabilities called for assistive technology including laptops, hearing aids, Voice over phones for deaf and blind.
- OVR in partnership with TAOA provided six Laptops for the TAOA computer lab.
- OVR Assistive Technology has also partnered with DYWA to create and provide a computer lab accessible to the wheelchair bound and disabled community.
- OVR and IL counselors continue to daily provide the community with assistance in completing applications for Assistive Technology, Independent Living, Older Blind +55, and Voc Rehab services.
- Construction of 25 wheelchair ramps with metal railings for consumers who are wheelchair bound.
- Purchase of 102 wheelchairs, 54 hospital beds, crutches, walkers, canes and all other medical supplies

### **The Independent Living Program**

The number of consumer case files reviewed for FY 2021 was 312. The office served 141 consumers and OPAD completed 25 Home Modification projects this year.

### **Older Blind Program**

The Older Blind Program total caseload for FY 2021 was 152. The office served 96 consumers and reviewed 152 case files. Outreach and home visitations to clients in the community were conducted throughout the year. Counseling and guidance was provided to our consumers and caregivers at home.

### **Office of Protection and Advocacy for the Disabled**

The Protection & Advocacy Project (P&A) is the federally mandated, statewide, protection and advocacy system serving individuals with disabilities in American Samoa. The central purpose of the protection and advocacy system is to respond to allegations of abuse, neglect, and violations of rights of persons with disabilities or discrimination based on their disability. P&A has eight federal programs: Protection and Advocacy for Individual with Developmental Disabilities (PADD), Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI), Protection and Advocacy for Individuals Rights (PAIR), Protection and Advocacy Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI), Eligibility for Protection and Advocacy Vote's Access (PAVA), Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS), and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals in Need of Assistive Technology (PAAT). The OPAD Year 2021 Program Accomplishments are as follows:

## **PAIMI (Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness) Monitoring and Investigations**

To prevent abuse and neglect in facilities, PAIMI visited and monitored the following facilities: the Juvenile Detention Center, LBJ Behavioral Health Center and the new Department of Health Transition Home. For FY2021 - there were 9 reported alleged cases of abuse. During FY2021 OPAD was able to contract a Staff Attorney paid share cost with all other OPAD programs.

### **Education and Training on mental illness**

*Training DPS Officers Basic Mental Health; Alternative Approaches DPS Training* - PAIMI was approved to coordinate a training of DPS officers on alternative approaches to individuals with mental illness in crisis. One outcome of the training has been DPS reaching out to PAIMI to seek assistance with referrals and also directly to other agencies such a Dept of Human & Social Services themselves. More training requested to be ongoing.

*Department of Public Safety officers also received training on the Legal Rights of PAIMI-eligible Individuals-* The training covered the basics of mental illness and the ways in which to approach and communicate with individuals in the community and the different mandates and the local law as it impacts individuals with mental illness. More training is planned for DPS Academy. This training will continue on with DPS at their in-service training as well as with the Academy training of new recruits.

*Training DOH Resident Assistant Staff Members-* Six new staff of the Department of Health Behavioral Health Services Division's new Transition Home were trained on rights of individuals with mental illness. Participants were also informed of federal requirements to be PAIMI-eligible for advocacy services and investigations of the program. The goal was to educate new employees (known as Resident Assistants) on the role of OPAD and particularly PAIMI program and rights of individuals with mental illness from abuse and neglect of PAIMI-eligible individuals including OPAD Access Authority. Staff were informed of the tasks of the PAIMI program to protect the rights of individuals in facilities and then in the community.

### **Advocacy by PAIMI for less Restriction and to Restore Rights**

In 2017, the Civil Commitment Review Committee (sub-Committee of ASG Behavioral Health Planning Council) was formed to oversee cases of individuals diagnosed with mental illness. Many of these individuals began revolving through the criminal justice system as at the time there was no collaborative oversight of their cases.

In 2021, the Civil Commitment Review Committee began talks on moving to get an old LBJ building turned into a transition home for the three individuals being kept at the LBJ Behavioral Health Clinic. However, it was apparent by July/August that this plan was not moving. Although the focus has been on Covid-19, the individuals held now for three years at LBJ Behavioral Health Center needed to be released. The individuals filed complaints requesting to cease their unnecessary restriction and wanted to regain their individual rights. PAIMI advocated with the

CCRC to move forward with the Transition Home. PAIMI collaborated with the PAIR program to ensure the home was ADA compliant, thus the Department of Health contracted an architect familiar with ADA regulations.

### **Inclusion of PAIMI-eligible persons in Suicide Prevention Policy**

The inclusion of PAIMI-eligible individuals to be included in the Suicide Prevention Taskforce continued this year. The new 988 number was made known to clients and to all PAIMI Advisory Council Members as well as the community so that access to immediate counseling and advice could be obtained by them. Secondly, a policy for the new Transition Home has been introduced. PAIMI clients and families were given flyers and information about the new number.

### **Advocate & Review Policies for ADA Compliance**

PAIMI advocated for policy for the Transition Home as well as rules and benchmarks for each individual as part of their individualized behavioral plans. Advocacy also included ADA compliance for the newly renovated building - ramps, threshold ramps, bathroom and shower accessibility as well as parking and fire safety policy was addressed by the Department of Health through their contractor.

### **TREND DATA PAIMI PROGRAM**

As illustrated in the Graph below, the year 2017 shows a high incidence of reports which were resolved through PAIMI program advocacy and interventions such as mediation and negotiation, education and change in policy. This graph is used to show how policy and procedures can impact the reduction of abuse in facilities. Most of those cases came from Monitoring and visiting the Tafuna Correctional Facility during FY2017-FY2019.



### **The American Samoa Pair Program FY 2021 (Protection & Advocacy for Individual Rights)**

The PAIR Program's function is to advocate for cases that are not eligible for both PAIMI and PADD (Protection & Advocacy for Developmental Disabilities) programs. PAIR is able to pick up those cases and to advocate for individuals' rights. The second part of this program for American Samoa is the issuance of Reserved Parking Placards, unique to the territory as no other protection and advocacy system in the other states and territories take up this task. These are issued based on disability criteria verified by physicians, identification and a fee of \$10.00 is charged by the office.

**Protect Individual Rights - Cases:**

For FY2021 PAIR handled alleged abuse and neglect cases, financial exploitation. This fiscal year PAIR also advocated for the rights of individuals with disabilities parking in Disability Parking Spaces, issued Parking Placards and advocated for those with disabilities traveling during repatriation to and from American Samoa. PAIR also offered technical assistance for the discussions at a Task Force meeting on the difference between Service Animals and therapy dogs.

**Advocate for Accessibility ADA Non-Compliance Issues - Buildings/Infrastructure**

Non-compliance letters to those businesses and government agencies were issued to agencies and private sectors who are not compliant e.g., lack of ramps, elevators or accessible bathrooms. The PNRS Board was reminded about the violation of ADA regulations if they are approving and issuing certificates of occupancy. An example of a government department not fully ADA compliant is the newly constructed

TAOA buildings which were completed by various contractors. Unfortunately, the contractors failed to use ADA regulations or be informed by the Dept of Public Works during the construction phase. Improper ramps, curb thresholds and accessible doors as well as inaccessible bathrooms plague elderly TAOA participants in daily programs putting them at risk for falls and injuries. Director of TAOA is already working to make the necessary modifications for the safety of our elderly participants.

**Monitoring Department of Health - Transition Home**

PAIR was able to collaborate with PAIMI to ensure that ADA regulations were adhered to in order for the old building to be modified to a fully accessible home. A new parking area with disability parking, wheelchair ramp to enter the facility, threshold ramps interior to exterior and other modifications were successfully made.

**Issuance of Parking Placards and Monitoring of Disability Parking Spaces**

The number of parking placards issued for FY2021 is 327 versus 408 same time last year. Although the number of disability parking spaces is increasing across the territory, placards issued expire three years after the issue date. OPAD Director, Deputy as well as PAIR Program Manager are currently issuing citations for vehicles violating the now local law and ADA regulations. Vehicles parked in Disability Parking spaces and not displaying the official parking placard will be ticketed with collaboration of Dept of Public Safety. A fine of \$300 will penalize such offenders. FY2022 will see stronger enforcement from other staff and selected Parking Citation Days. Staff will also monitor placards hanging to check the number registered to the user.

**National Disability Rights Network- Fire Grant**

Earlier this year, OPAD submitted a project proposal for the award of seed money to the amount of \$5000 directly from NDRN, for the opportunity to make fire emergency services for people with disabilities available for their safety. OPAD decided to use these seed funds for outfitting the

Hope House with equipment such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

OPAD has collaborated in various projects with the Tri-Agency and DD Network this fiscal year, in order to advocate for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. These included: Emergency preparedness, Adopting the ADA in American Samoa - FonoTalk, Disability Awareness Month, Popcorn Vaccination Day, and UCEDD/DDPC/PAIMI Advisory Councils - Members' input to the State Plans for UCEDD and DDPC, as well as input from community members and council members into PAIMI Advisory Council Statement of Goals and Priorities for FY2022.

### **Election Office**

January 4, 2021, the Election office started with the purging process, in accordance with Election Law regarding those voters who did not vote in two consecutive elections. This year 2,590 people have been removed from the voter registration list. All those who have been purged from the election roll have been notified in writing and about their current voting status. Furthermore, they are encouraged to re-register to vote before the upcoming 2022 Midterm Election.

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# Culture

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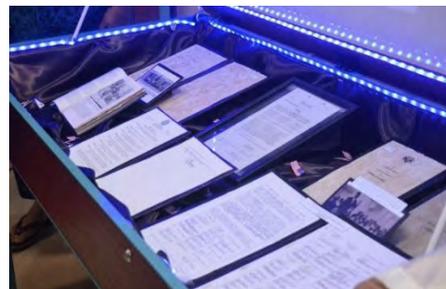
Our culture is the pillar of our existence as Samoans. Our Samoan way of life, or Fa’a-Samoa, is our identity. It grows and unifies families, builds pride and sense of belonging to the community and society. The Lemanu-Talauuga Administration is committed to the preservation of our culture by ensuring our oral and written history are emphasized in our local education system. The Administration supports opportunities that foster not only our history and language, but also our cultural arts. This commitment to our culture is reflected in the number of ongoing programs and new developments initiated this past year.

## Office of Political Status, Constitutional Review, and Federal Relations

61 years ago, in April of 1960, the first Constitutional Convention of American Samoa gathered to create our Constitution. Although it was signed and approved by Secretary of Interior, Fred A. Seaton on April 27, 1960, it did not become effective until October 17, 1960. In honor of this momentous occasion, Honorable Governor Peter Tali Coleman issued a proclamation declaring October 17, 1960, Constitution Day in American Samoa. Governor Coleman referred to the constitution as the “greatest step forward in the political development of the Territory since the raising of the American flag over the island of Tutuila in 1900.” In continuing with this legacy, a proclamation was issued to honor Constitution Day and the significant role our Constitution has played throughout the Territory’s history.

### Constitution Day Exhibit

Friday, October 15, 2021 saw the unveiling of a special exhibit meant to honor and memorialize October 17<sup>th</sup> as Constitution Day in American Samoa. The exhibit was a collaborative effort between The Governor’s Office, the Feleti Barstow Public Library, the Office of Archives and Records Management. This imagery spoke to the true essence of what our Constitution stands for – a protection of our people, our lands, our culture, and our Samoan way of life.



### Upcoming Constitutional Convention

We have a unique form of American democratic government that integrates and protects our Fa’a-Samoa. The influx of western influence has made it necessary to adapt our Fa’a-Samoa to ensure its survival and the preservation of its core values and beliefs. We are at a critical moment in our history where relationships with the Federal government are being re-defined and re-examined. US territories such as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia are demanding changes according to the will of the people and blazing the trail for other territories such as ours. Similarly, the upcoming Constitutional Convention will provide an avenue to bring these discussions to the forefront and communicate the will of our leaders and community. In collaboration with the Department of Education, plans are in place to incorporate civics lesson plans into secondary and community college curriculums.

After 121 years as a US Territory, the protection of Samoan lands, culture, and natural resources remains one of the most critical challenges to the Samoan way of life - how to preserve and protect the Samoan way of life while staying within the legal boundaries of the United States Constitution. Empowering our people to take control of our destiny amid pressures from the federal government and court rulings will secure our inalienable rights as citizens of American Samoa.

As the Administration and Fono engage in plans for a Constitutional Convention, we must remember to learn from our past, to examine the present, and keep our eyes on the future as our people seek to engage in a constitutional review process that is authentic, participatory and transparent.

### **American Samoa’s Constitution and Political Status Curriculum Guide**

From July 2021 to August 2021, The Office of Political Status, Constitutional Review, & Federal Relations, in collaboration with the Secondary Office of ASDOE, hosted committee meetings with teacher representatives from each public high school in order to create a Curriculum Guide to teach American Samoa’s Constitution and Political Status in High School classrooms. By establishing cross-school relationships with teachers from all the social studies departments, the committee successfully established an ongoing relationship with the Office to host a presentation of the Curriculum Guide at Samoana High School.

On August 18, 2021, the Office of Political Status, Constitutional Review, & Federal Relations presented a Curriculum Guide for teaching American Samoa’s Constitution and Political Status to the public high school social studies teachers and principals. The integration of the curriculum guide into schools is a crucial step to helping our youth recognize and understand the significance of our Constitution.

### **Samoan Language Commission**

Administrative bill underway to establish a Samoan Language Commission to protect and perpetuate the Samoan language.

### **Office of Samoan Affairs**

From the onset of the Administration the Secretary of the Office of Samoan Affairs (OSA) has been very persistent with efforts to attain set goals for OSA before the closing of fiscal year 2021. To successfully accomplish this great task, the OSA under the direction of the Secretary initiated several key projects to help improve services of OSA, as well as ensuring development of employees professionally. The following have been initiated and implemented in FY 2021:

- Established new policy with handling of Building and Land Use permits
- Established new Certificate of Irreconcilable Disputes policy
- Required more participation from village mayors and village police with awareness programs of various ASG departments
- Increased participation with covid task force agenda
- Modernization of hearings
  - Purchasing of equipment to digitize archives for use in land and title dispute hearings.

- To better assist in record keeping, recording equipment was installed to be during hearing proceedings

### **American Samoa Historic Preservation Office**

The American Samoa Historic Preservation is responsible for preserving our land, culture, and history by reviewing all federally funded undertakings in accordance with the National Preservation Act of 1966. Our land is our treasure. It holds sacred information that tells the story of our people. ASHPO ensures that disturbance to our land, and its natural resources are well documented for the future of our Territory. Some of the major infrastructure projects that have been documented due to possible adverse effects on Historic Properties are:

- Pago Pago International Airport Apron Rehabilitation Project
- Ofu Runway Rehabilitation Project
- DOE Infrastructure Improvement Projects - demolition of Historic Samoan Fale's - one Historic Samoan Fale will be saved at every school site to be used as the School's Resource Center
- Department of Public Works Federal Highway Rehabilitation Projects (e.g., Malaeloa, Leapaga Road, Taputimu)
- American Samoa Power Authority Sewer line and New Waterline installation Projects
- Fagaima Drainage - FEMA funded project

### **Department of Administrative Services-The Office of Archives and Records Management**

OARM, the Office of Archives and Records Management, continues to manage and preserve all American Samoa Government historical archives. Archival records are a valuable part of current records and one that has a permanent significance for our history and culture. The archives consist of microfilm, paper, photographs, tape, audio-video media and electronic discs. In 2021, DAS-OARM achieved the following:

- The Archivist and a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) representative met with Governor Lemanu and DAS Director for a formal presentation of Digitized Microfilm drives contracted and received in January 2021. Contents consisted of 1900-1974 Vital Statistics archives and records and Matai and Land Title cases. The latter items were generously donated by the LDS Church and plans therefore began to establish a public Digital Archives Reading Room for public researchers. The contract entailed digitization of fading microfilms and publication of archives more than 90 yrs. at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/location/5931727?region=American%20Samoa>
- DAS-OARM published a public information/contact website in January 2021 to relay DAS services. Some other technologic innovations were making public microfilms available online along with public Finding Guides at the DAS-OARM website.
- Assisted Feleti Barstow Library with a PREL Pacific Digital Library project.
- Assisted with digitization and forwarding of 1978-2020 ASG portraits to the new ASG Honolulu office for public display/viewing. Additional images, prints and captions were also prepared for a Governor's House display in October 2021.

- The Archivist and the Friends of The Jean P. Haydon Museum completed a \$10,000.00 AS Humanities Council ASHC HEART grant. A professional website was made and launched on August 30th, 2021. FOM also applied and received a second ASHC grant of \$20,000 in November to sustain the website, support a high school museum club and conduct a few monthly television interviews during 2022.
- The Archivist also assisted with a Council of Library and Information Resources CLIR digitization application that resulted in a \$498,895.00 award to KVZK-TV to digitize and publish early KVZK-TV VTRs online for public viewing via the Library of Congress. These activities are intended to reinforce the value of the library, archives and museum humanities to the American Samoa community.
- OARM Records Division personnel completed 228 research requests; logged/released 261 inactive temp. files; issued 21 Certified Statements and processed 75 ASG Dept. Records Management functions.
- 250 inactive boxes of archives or records were received and stored at OARM. Of these, 204 boxes (81% ) were processed and acknowledged and 46 boxes (29%) are in progress.
- During 2021, 116 boxes from a backlog transfer were also processed.
- Several new Finding Guides were made, including the LDS Digital Archives; the 1967 Constitution of American Samoa files; public Fita Fita Veterans files; National Archives P2283 microfilm content guides; and a new High Court Matai and Land Titles guide.

## **American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, & Humanities**

American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, & Humanities (ASCACH) hosts a variety of activities for arts programming, personnel, and the museum geared at encouraging and preserving the traditional arts of American Samoa. Below are some of the ongoing ASCACH Projects:

### **Poetry Out Loud Competition**

The Poetry Out Loud, “POL” is a national, secondary education grade level, memorized poetry recitation competition managed by a partnership essentially including U.S. state/territory high school student participants and poetry focus area educators; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Poetry Foundation; and a federally partnered with NEA state arts agency (particularly the American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, & Humanities - ASCACH). American Samoa’s Audrey Rose Sevaaetasi (Samoana High School) placed 4th in the recent ‘Poetry Out Loud’ semifinals. She competed in the national virtual semifinals — a first for American Samoa, and placed very well in a field of 19 national students.

### **Children's Samoan Arts Summer Program**

The Children's Samoan Arts Summer Program took place at the museum July - August 2021. A total of 20 students (of ages 7 - 17) benefitted by learning Samoan language arts & weaving, woodcarving, ukulele, siva Samoa, and siapo-making & elei in demonstration workshops orchestrated by the agency.

### **Community ARTicipates Program (CAP)**

The Community ARTicipates Program was held on April 15 – 16 and November 18- 19, 2021 as a component to assist the local Department of Agriculture's general Farm Fair programs. Selected

organizations (church youth groups) executed performing arts pieces with themed choreography and live musical accompaniment that focused on "*redefining agriculture*".

#### **Arts in Education Mini Grant - AIEMG**

Under review are the AIEMG guidelines and application for scholastic year 2021 - 2022. Feedback (from AIE Panel, applicants, and ASCACH staff) on covering prerequisites that impact project planning, has been of great use. Guideline content creators of AIE Programming made great considerations on guideline refinement. Upon director and advisory board approval, the AIEMG Guidelines and Application is ready to be implemented for local K-12 school teachers to apply for funding that will support their arts education projects and in turn yield better results in student learning.

#### **44th Annual Holiday Music Festival (2021)**

The annual holiday music festival aims to preserve music arts preservation in the Territory. A total of forty-two choirs and performing groups participated in the annual Holiday Music Festival in December 2021.

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## Our Path Forward

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In the first year of the Lemanu-Talauega Administration, assessments were made and implemented to address the key priorities of our Administration while simultaneously combating unparalleled threats to our community. Our response to the pandemic was met with many challenges and uncertainty. However, our strategic and collaborative efforts involved a vast spectrum of community leaders, partners, and organizations. Early efforts were devoted to the repatriation of thousands of residents while preventing spread of the virus as cases surged across the United States of America. At present, we have welcomed our first commercial flight of the year and have confirmed our limited flights schedule into the summer. And while our stringent testing and quarantine policies in response to the coronavirus have been faced with criticism, at least one thing holds true: We remain one of the safest places globally in the last two years of the pandemic.

American Samoa along with other US Territories face historic inequities and underinvestment that will persist long after the pandemic has run its course. The drivers of our economic engine have been the influx of federal dollars, feeding every sector of our economy and the increased demand from our main export to the United States. And although our overall economic indicators for American Samoa are strong, we must be cautious and act with fiscal responsibility. We have experienced some of the highest rates of inflation in recent years and as the cost of goods, fuel, and shipping rise, the effects are felt in every household. Government spending and the fish processing industry fared well in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, our dependence on these industries illustrates the fragility of our economy and how critical economic diversification is to our long-term prosperity. Nonetheless, we must not be complacent and move forward with a focus on sustainability.

Critical steps have been taken to address systemic issues of our government. Shifting toward e-government and a more digital economy to build resilience in an era of unprecedented global challenges. Wages across the government have been lifted toward a more “living wage” in the face of rising costs of living. The business community has been welcomed with an open seat at the table regarding the decision-making of our government - from the COVID-19 Task Force, numerous boards, and in developing solutions to meet production goals of StarKist and one of our economy’s main drivers.

ARPA funded improvements to our healthcare infrastructure will benefit our community for generations to come. Providing immediate acute medical services and treatment and a plan for cultural practices modifications, early dietary & healthy-living education and increased athletic activity in elementary and high school may prove the best investment for our long-term healthcare system. There are looming changes to the Medicaid funding that will necessitate wholesale changes to how we finance healthcare services and treatment. Comprehensive and strategic action plans are being developed to improve strategies and care for polysubstance use populations.

The effects of climate change threaten our island homes with rising sea levels, natural disasters, and vulnerabilities to food security even as the pandemic rages on. A resilience office and climate commission has been established to better coordinate and develop sustainable solutions to our adaptation and development strategies. We are hopeful that the Federal government will make progress on the Build Back Better legislation to allow significant climate change investments.

Other challenges ahead include developing a long-term solution to the rising unfunded liability of the ASG Retirement Fund and the updating of the 2000 Tax table and the financial impact of such a change to our tax policy. We must adapt and address these challenges in a measured and fiscally responsible manner. These territory-wide problems will require territory-wide solutions, careful assessment, and strategically crafted plans involving Territorial stakeholders to include leaders in the Fono, government, the private sector, faith-based, and traditional leaders.

While the last years have been difficult, together we traversed uncharted waters with a focus on building resilience and improving the quality of life for all families. The achievements and progress made has only been possible through the collective actions happening every day in our community. We are confident that by holding firm to our faith and continuing along the path of collaboration the possibilities ahead are limitless.

Executive Branch: Cabinet Listing 2021			
Authorities		Name	Title
1	American Samoa Community College (ASCC)	Dr. Rosevonne M. Pato	President
2	American Samoa Medical Center Authority (ASMCA-LBJ)	Faumuina J. Faumuina Jr.	Chief Executive Officer
3	American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA)	Wallon Young	Chief Executive Officer
4	American Samoa Shipyard Authority (ASSA)	Carlos Sanchez	Chief Executive Officer
5	American Samoa Telecommunications Authority (ASTCA)	Chuck Leota	Chief Executive Officer
6	American Samoa Visitors Bureau (ASVB)	Taimalelagi Minnie Tuia	Executive Director
7	American Samoa Development Authority (ASEDA)	Blanche Lulu Barber	Executive Director
8	Development Bank of American Samoa (DBAS)	Ruth Matagi-Faatili	President
9	Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL)	Emma Solaita Malele	Territorial Librarian
10	Territorial Bank of American Samoa (TBAS)	David A. Buehler	President
Departments/Offices/Agencies		Name	Title
1	Administrative Law Judge (ALJ)	Marie Alailima-Lafaale	Administrative Law Judge
2	Administrative Services (DAS)	Afalava E. Afalava	Director
3	Agriculture (DOA)	Solia I. Mutini	Director
4	American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture, & Humanities (ASCACH)	Fuata S. Tiimalu	Director
5	Commerce (DOC)	Petti Tagipo Matila	Director
6	Education (DOE)	Talauega Dr. Samasoni Asaeli	Director
7	Election Office (EO)	Dr. Lealofi Uiagalelei	Commissioner
8	Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA)	Lefega Faamao Asalele Jr.	Director
9	Homeland Security (AS-DHS)	Samana S. Veavea	Director
10	Human & Social Services (DHSS)	Muavaefaatasi J. Suisala	Director
11	Human Resources (DHR)	Lynn Pulou-Alaimalo	Director
12	Legal Affairs (DLA)	Fainu'ulelei F. Ala'ilima Utu	Attorney General
13	Marine & Wildlife Resources (DMWR)	Taotasi A. Soliai	Director
14	Parks & Recreation (DPR)	Kenneth S. Tupua	Director
15	Port Administration (DPA)	Christopher J. King	Director
16	Procurement (OP)	Ti'alemasunu Dr. Mikaele Etuale	Director
17	Program, Planning and Budget Office (OPB)	Catherine A. Saelua	Director
18	Property Management (OPM)	Poleen N. Asalele	Director
19	Protection & Advocacy for the Disabled (OPAD)	Matautu Dr. Peter Tinitali	Director
20	Public Defender (PD)	Michael White	Public Defender
21	Public Health (DOH)	Motusa T. Nua	Director
22	Public Information (OPI)	Aoelua S. Aoelua	Director
23	Public Safety (DPS)	PC Lefiti F. Pese	Commissioner
24	Public Works (DPW)	Faleosina Voigt	Director
25	Samoa Affairs - Local Government (OSA)	PC Mauga T. Asuega	Secretary of Samoan Affairs
26	Territorial Administration on Aging (TAOA)	Evelyn Lili'o Satele	Director
27	Treasury (DTR)	Malemo L. Tausaga	Treasurer
28	Youth & Women's Affairs (DYWA)	Dr. Salote Aoelua-Fanene	Director
GO Line Agencies		Name	Title
1	American Rescue Plan Oversight Office (ARPA)	Keith Gebauer	Executive Director
2	American Samoa Office-Hawaii	Tuiafono V. Sua	Director
3	Criminal Justice Planning Agency (CJPA)	Mariana Timu-Faiai	Director
4	Governor's Resilience Office	Ufagafa Ray Tulafono	Executive Director
5	Historic Preservation (ASHPO)	Tuimalo E. Pau'u Zodiacal	Director
6	Insurance Commission Office	Ben Te'o	Insurance Commissioner
7	Medicaid State Agency	Sandra King-Young	Director
8	Office of Disaster Assistance and Petroleum Management (ODAPM)	Lisa Tuato'o	Director
9	Sports Complex (SC)	Uta'ifeau Lefiu Bill Kalasa	Director
10	Territorial Audit Office (TAO)	Tofa Sualauvi Su'a	Acting Territorial Auditor
11	Territorial Energy Office (TEO)	Dr. Misipati A. Salanoa	Director
12	Veteran's Affairs Office (VA)	Paepaelele M. Jamias	Director
13	Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)	Poumele P. Poumele	Director
14	Workmen's Compensation Commission (WCC)	Sagatea Filoiali'i	Commissioner